10 QUOTATIONS THAT DEFINED THE 20TH CENTURY

BBC HISTORY REVEALED

100th issue

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE

WARS OF THE ROSES

The medieval clash that tore England apart and launched the Tudor dynasty

WHAT IF THE WHITE SHIP HADN'T SUNK?

ISSUE 100 / NOVEMBER 2021 / £5.50

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WELCOME NOVEMBER 2021

A c1908 painting depicts Edmund Beaufort being challenged by Richard, Duke of York, to choose between the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster

The 15th-century series of civil wars, fought between the houses of Lancaster and York and widely known as **the Wars of the Roses, boasts some of the most famous individuals in British history** and has inspired countless authors, playwrights and filmmakers ever since. From Richard III and Lady Margaret Beaufort, to the so-called Princes in the Tower and Henry Tudor, the future Henry VII, the cast of characters and their legacy continues to intrigue. In this month's essential guide, with the help of expert Lauren Johnson, **we take a closer look at the pivotal conflict – including the women who wielded power behind the scenes and the sibling rivalry that shook England**. Turn to page 28 to get started.

Elsewhere, to mark the 100th issue of *BBC History Revealed*, **Dr Seán Lang selects 10 quotations that he feels defined the 20th century** – from Dr Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a dream" speech of 1963, to former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's impassioned call for women's rights, in 1995 (*page 64*). We'd love to find out which of the 10 quotations you think has made the most impact – **simply go online and cast your vote at *historyextra.com/tenquotes***.

Also in this issue, we investigate the tough conditions faced by British women working in munitions factories during World War I (*page 61*), and consider what might have happened had the *White Ship* not sunk in 1120 with the loss of Henry I's only legitimate heir (*page 70*). Plus, you can **find out more about our exciting new competition for children aged 6–13**. Details are on page 60.

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

Charlotte

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

17
The length, in minutes, of Dr Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a dream" speech

156
One estimate for the total number of children fathered by Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II

43
The number of goals scored by footballer Lily Parr during her first season with the Dick, Kerr Ladies team

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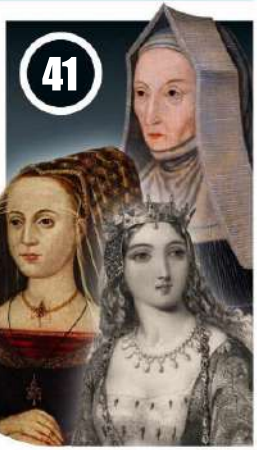
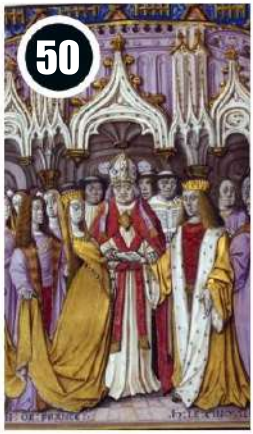
▲ The story of the women and girls who risked their lives for the war effort

◀ Discover how the symbolism of the Wars of the Roses was carefully exploited by Henry VII following his victory at Bosworth



▲ Meet the powerful women of the Wars of the Roses

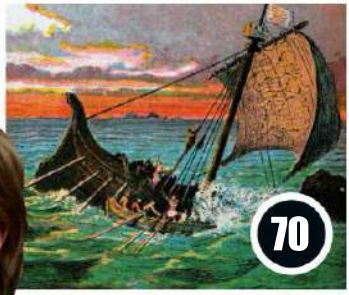


▲ Were the Tudors actually Tudors to begin with?

▲ What fate befell the Princes in the Tower?

▲ Inside the life of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick

▼ Modern history's top soundbites: from Muhammad Ali to Margaret Thatcher



▲ Why the loss of Henry I's heir changed the course of history

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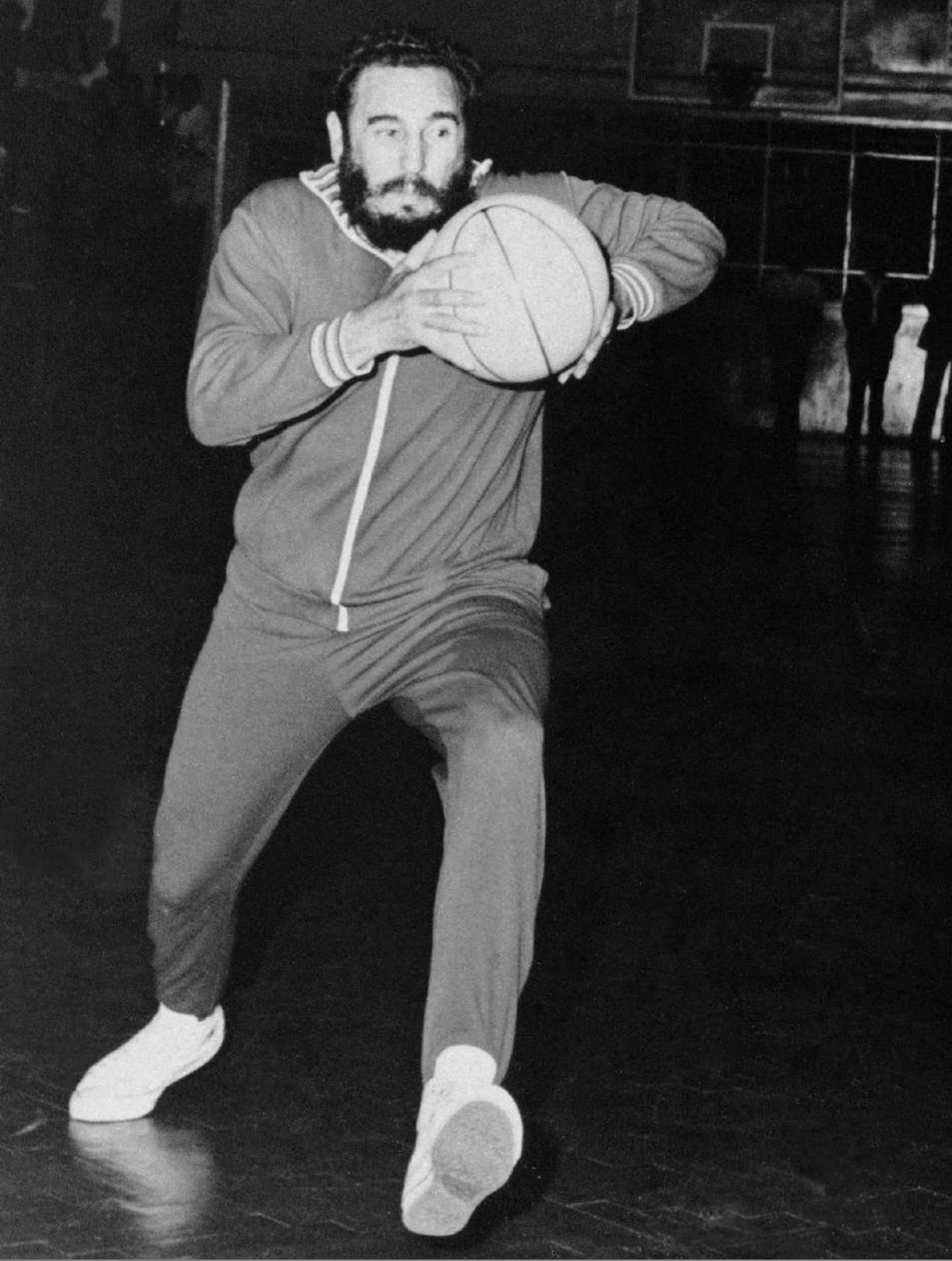
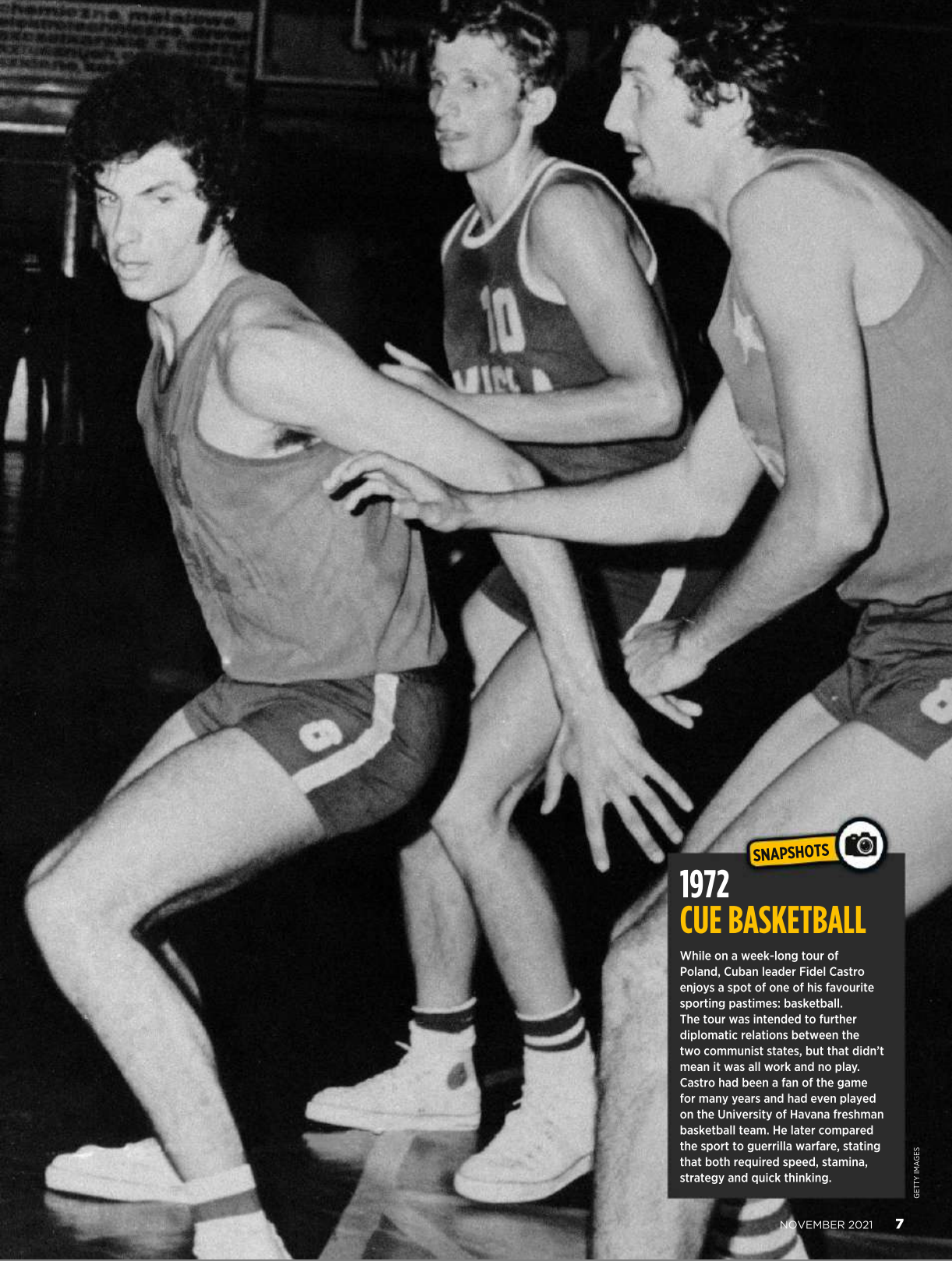




SNAPSHOTS

1972
CUE BASKETBALL

While on a week-long tour of Poland, Cuban leader Fidel Castro enjoys a spot of one of his favourite sporting pastimes: basketball. The tour was intended to further diplomatic relations between the two communist states, but that didn't mean it was all work and no play. Castro had been a fan of the game for many years and had even played on the University of Havana freshman basketball team. He later compared the sport to guerrilla warfare, stating that both required speed, stamina, strategy and quick thinking.

GETTY IMAGES

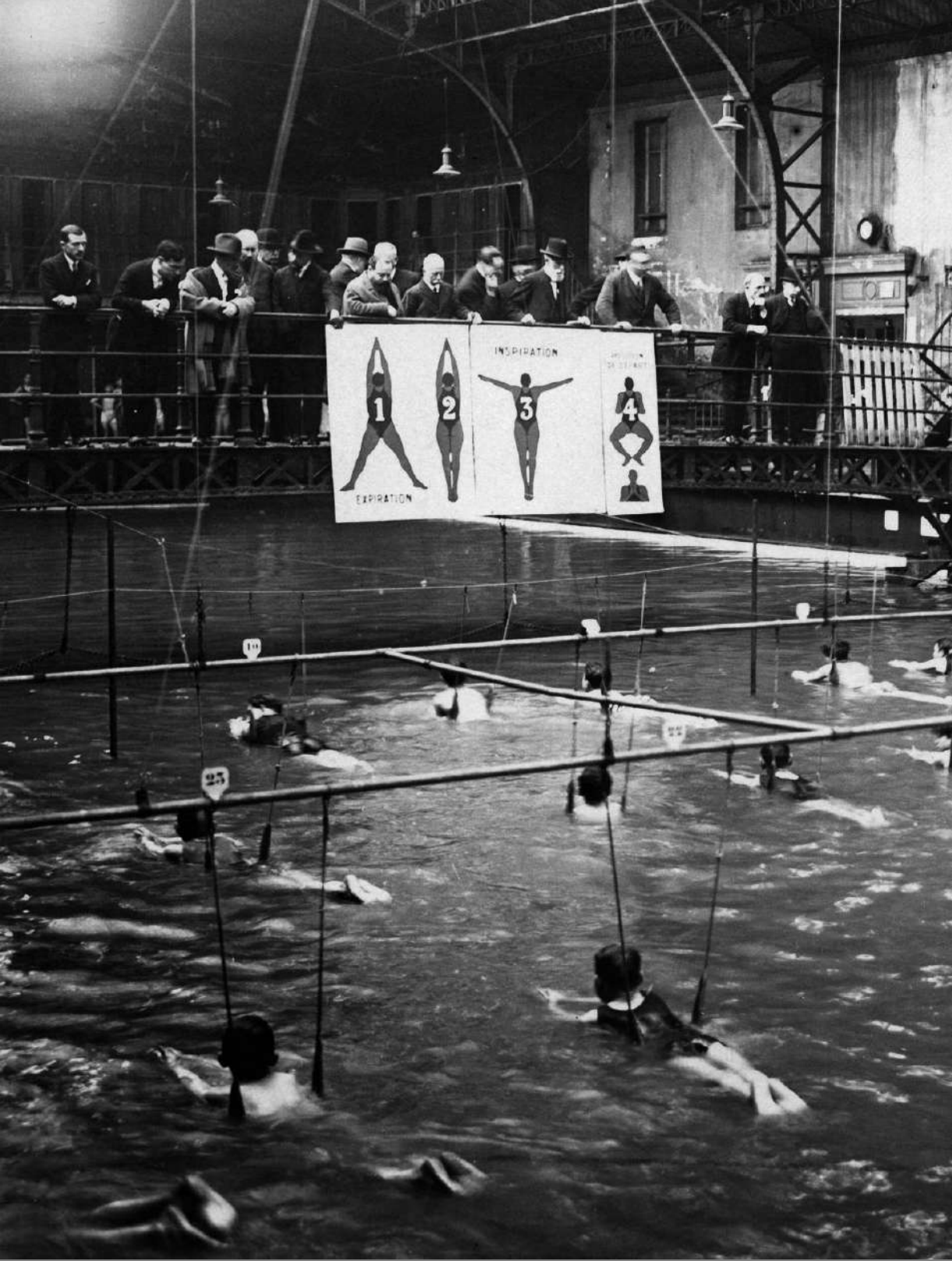
SNAPSHOTS

c1900
RUSH HOUR

Today, the car, bus, train or electric scooter are all common commuting choices. There are bicycles too, of course, but usually ones intended for solo riders. At the turn of the 20th century, things looked a little different. These men are travelling to work in style on the so-called Dunlop Express, essentially a bicycle train. Although he wasn't the first to come up with the principle, it had been Scottish veterinarian James Boyd Dunlop who developed the first practical pneumatic tyre in 1888 – an inflatable rubber tube that allowed for the smoothest ride yet. Soon, they were universal on the two-wheeled (and however many wheels this thing has) machines.

GETTY IMAGES

EXPRESS


INSPIRATION
1
2
3
4
EXPIRATION

SNAPSHOTS

1928
MAKING WAVES

This Parisian swimming lesson shows just one of several approaches taken by swimming instructors of the past. The children are attached to a frame that allows them to practice their strokes safely, following the handy diagram in front of them, without sinking. A similar apparatus saw would-be swimmers tethered to something resembling a fishing rod. Swimming lessons became a regular part of school curricula in the 19th century, thanks in part to the development of the railways, which made it easier, and quicker, to visit the seaside.

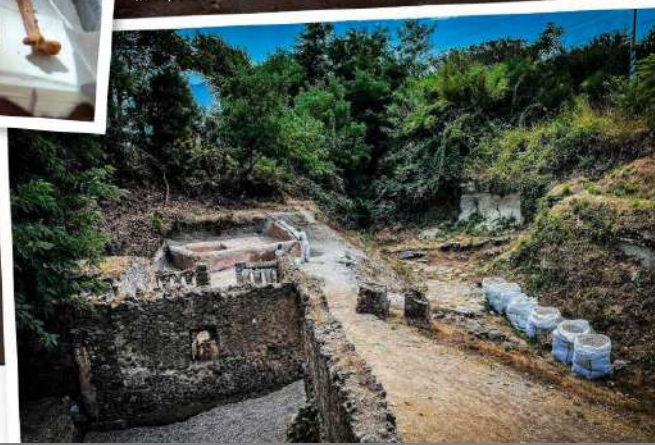
GETTY IMAGES

THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH...

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

LEFT: Some of the bones from the skeleton of Marcus Venerius Secundio, found in Pompeii

BELOW: The remains were discovered in the necropolis of Porta Sarno, east of the city's centre



PARTIALLY MUMMIFIED REMAINS DISCOVERED IN POMPEII

The partially mummified remains of Marcus Venerius Secundio – a former slave who rose to become a priest and custodian of Pompeii's Temple of Venushas – have been unearthed in a tomb in the Porta Sarno necropolis in Pompeii, Italy. Secundio's mummification, thought to have taken place a few decades before the AD 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius, is rare, as Roman men were usually cremated. Described as the best-preserved human remains ever discovered in Pompeii, white hair and part of an ear are still visible on the body.

ALAMY X3, ALBION ARCHAEOLOGY, DR JASON MONAGHAN, NORTHUMBRIAN WATER, UNIVERSITY OF HASANUDDIN X2

BEDFORD DEVELOPMENT UNEARTHS ANCIENT FINDS

Excavations at a housing development site in Biddenham, near Bedford, have revealed a c6,000-year-old Neolithic or early Bronze Age monument, thought to have been used for ceremonies and rituals. Iron Age remains were also found, as was the unexpected discovery of an Anglo-Saxon 'sunken-featured building' and oven. Iain Leslie from Albion Archaeology, which undertook the project, said "[The remains] will contribute significantly to our understanding of how the local landscape was inhabited during these periods."

ALDERNEY ROMAN FORT REVEALS ITS SECRETS

A dig on Alderney has shed light on how a Roman fort was used as a German bunker during the World War II occupation of the Channel Islands. Alderney Nunnery was built around 1,700 years ago by the Romans and has been occupied many times since – as a medieval barracks, a Napoleonic warning tower and more recently in World War II. The German forces – who occupied the Channel Islands between 1940 and 1945 – built a personal bunker directly inside the fort, destroying much of the structure's interior in the process. Archaeologists have also uncovered the tower's Roman courtyard and plan to return next year to investigate its medieval history.

HADRIAN'S WALL HIDING IN NEWCASTLE

A three-metre-long section of Hadrian's Wall has been found during repairs to a water main in Newcastle city centre. The remains are thought to be part of the earliest phase of the stone wall, which was constructed between c122–128 AD as a defensive barrier at the northern frontier of the Roman empire. Historians have known for some time that the Roman wall ran through Newcastle as part of its 73-mile stretch across the country, but its exact route has been long been a mystery. A buffer will now be built around the remains so that the repair works can continue.

£1,850

The sum recently paid for the topping of a slice of cake from the 1981 wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana

DNA SHEDS LIGHT ON LOST TOALEAN PEOPLE

Recent DNA analysis from a woman who died 7,200 years ago in Indonesia could challenge ideas about human migration. Tests on the remains of the teenager – found in a cave on the island of Sulawesi in 2015 – not only reveal a genetic makeup similar to present-day Indigenous Australians, Melanesians and the Indigenous people on the islands of New Guinea and the western Pacific, but also a link to ancient Asia. It's thought that the woman belonged to a lost lineage of hunter-gatherers known as the Toalean people – some of the earliest settlers to leave mainland Asia.

The displays and dioramas at the Royal Armouries need regular cleaning to keep the armour shining

ROYAL ARMOURIES X/5

ABOVE: Caring for around 2,700 objects of arms and armour in the Hall of Steel takes Lauren Piper's work to new heights

RIGHT: Lauren with the Foot Combat Armour made for a young, athletic Henry VIII

FAR RIGHT: An Elizabethan 'jack of plate' receives careful conservation treatment

Objects conservator at the Royal Armouries, Leeds

Lauren Piper

HOW DID YOU GET INTO CONSERVATION AT THE ROYAL ARMOURIES?

It came about in a bit of a roundabout way to be honest! I was always interested in the past and did my undergraduate degree in archaeology, but then I felt that I wanted to pursue a career in academia and completed a PhD in Roman Egyptian funerary portraiture. At that time, I was volunteering at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and realised that my true love was working with historical objects. It was another few years before I took the plunge and did a master's in conservation – it was as if everything fell into place at that point because conservation is a career that combines history, science and art, all of which I love. When the job came up at the Royal Armouries, I jumped at the chance.

WHAT DOES AN AVERAGE DAY AT YOUR JOB LOOK LIKE?

I would say there isn't really any such thing as an average day. One day I can be working as part of a team cleaning objects that are on open display in the galleries, the next I might be X-raying an object to learn more about its construction, or doing an in-depth conservation treatment at my workbench. Our busiest times are often during the lead-up to the installation of exhibitions or new displays. Obviously, our collection is inherently hazardous as it contains large numbers of edged weapons and firearms, but in the conservation team we have to manage other hazards, such as radiation and asbestos, so that forms quite a large part of my work as well.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO CONSERVE ARMOUR AND WEAPONRY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?

It sounds a bit of a cliché, but... so that we learn from the past. For better or worse, the conflicts of the past have shaped the world that we live in today and it is important to understand and learn from this. I would say that the history of the development of arms and armour is very much one that reflects – and sometimes drives – wider developments in technology and design.

Lauren carefully takes a look at the child's armour made for the future Charles II

> "The opportunity to see evidence of use, and even mistakes, in decoration makes these pieces very human"

Many of the pieces in our collection represent the highest standards of craftsmanship. There are also objects that reflect the lives of people from all walks of life, from farmers taking up arms at times of conflict, to royalty. Our collection is never static and we continue to acquire a diverse range of objects to keep the story going.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PIECES THAT YOU'VE LOOKED AFTER?

I have been privileged to care for two of Henry VIII's armours: the Foot Combat Armour that was designed for him to wear at the Field of Cloth of Gold tournament in 1520, and the Tonlet Armour, which he actually wore following a last-minute rule change before the event. Because the best armours were designed to fit the wearer perfectly, it's really something to get an idea of the stature of the man when he was young and athletic – before his famous weight gain.

I very much enjoy working on composite objects that combine multiple materials as they present interesting technical challenges. For instance, we have examples of a type of body defence called a 'jack of plate', comprising a network of small iron plates stitched between layers of fabric. It's also exciting to conserve some of our more historic firearms: disassembling the lock mechanisms can be quite puzzle-like and you often discover makers' marks or decorative finishes that only a few people will have ever seen.

WHAT ARE THE BEST AND WORST PARTS OF YOUR JOB?

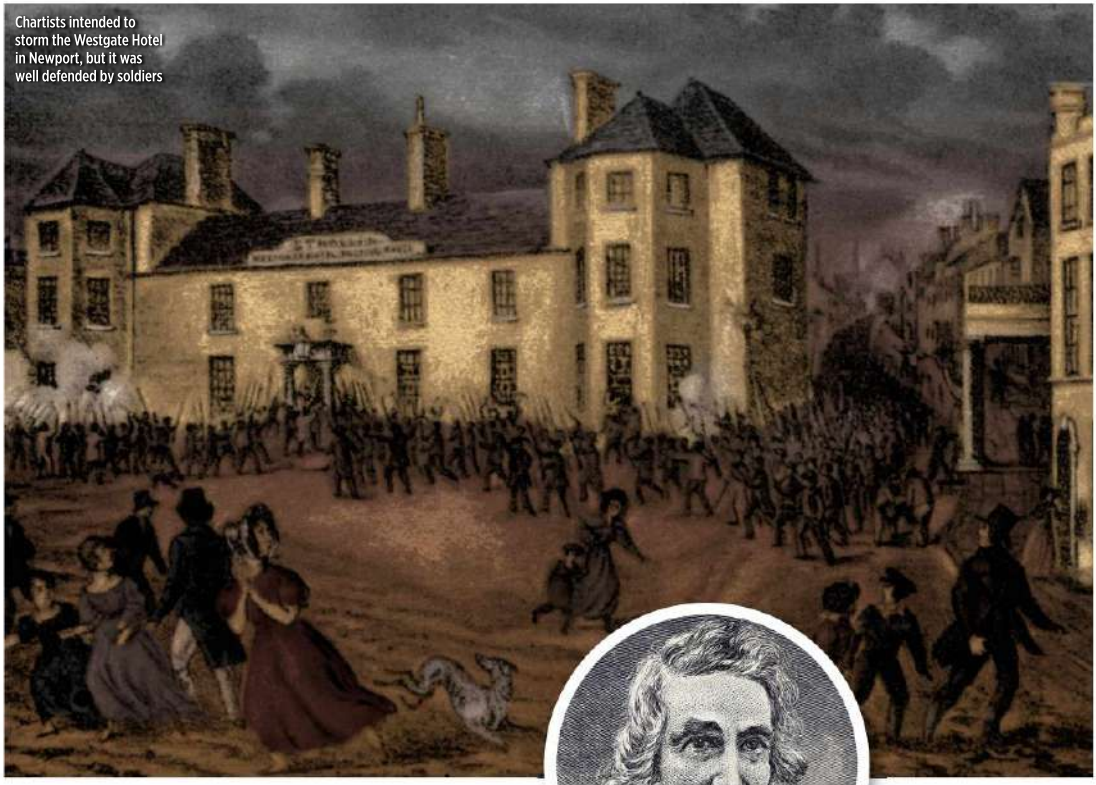
I don't think I could ever tire of getting to handle and work on objects that were made, worn and used by people who lived hundreds of years before me. The opportunity to appreciate the craftsmanship up close, to see evidence of use, and even mistakes, in decoration makes these pieces very human. As we lend objects to other institutions, I sometimes get the chance to courier pieces to different venues both in the UK and abroad.

In terms of the worst parts of my job, some of the work that has to be done at height can be a little scary, though also rather exciting. At the museum in Leeds, we have the Hall of Steel, a glass tower containing the largest mass display of arms and armour created since the 19th century. Last year, the team were required to clean each of the c2,700 objects on show; for the interior of the tower this necessitated working from and driving a mobile working platform 23 metres in the air. It was pretty nerve-wracking, but we were definitely on an adrenaline high afterwards!

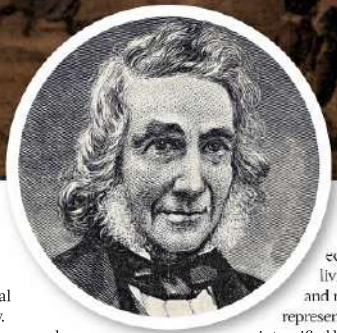
LAUREN PIPER is an objects conservator at the Royal Armouries in Leeds and an accredited member of the Institute of Conservation. Find out more about the objects and collections Lauren works on at *royalarmouries.org*

The Newport Rising

Words: Emma Slattery Williams



Chartists intended to storm the Westgate Hotel in Newport, but it was well defended by soldiers



William Lovett wrote the People's Charter and was a leader of the movement

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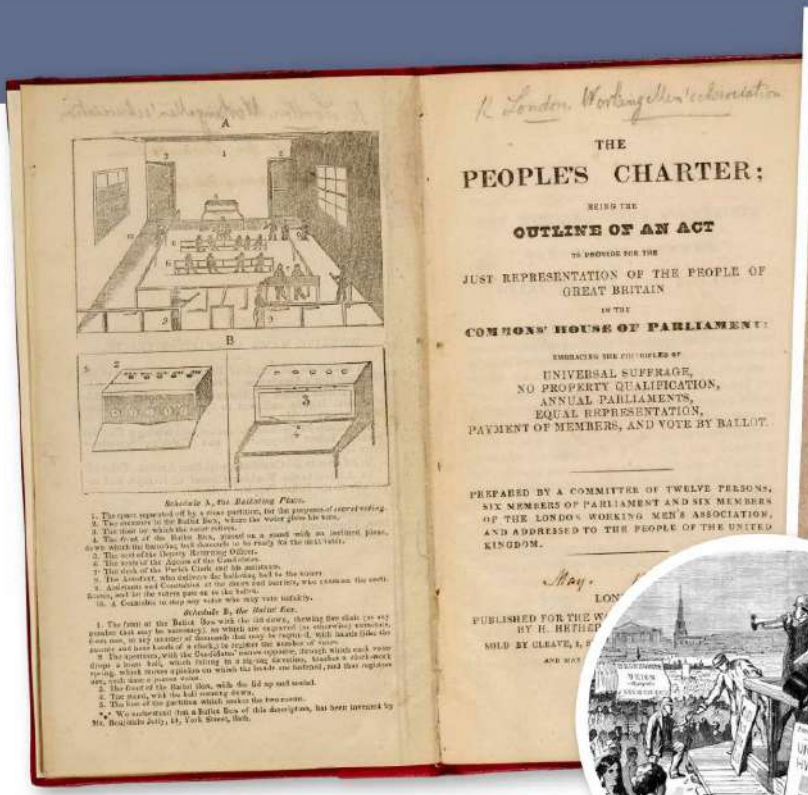
Soaked through and exhausted after spending the night marching across the rainy Welsh countryside, around 5,000 men, many of them armed, descended on the town of Newport. Some were miners, some were labourers; all were Chartists or sympathisers to the cause of democratic reform. On that morning of 4 November 1839, they headed straight to the Westgate Hotel to make their protest heard and to free the Chartist prisoners being held there. What they did not know was that lying in wait for them inside the hotel were dozens of soldiers and special constables. The fight for political change was about to get bloody.

The Chartist movement had emerged in 1838 with the People's Charter. Drafted principally by a cabinet maker named William Lovett, co-founder of the London Working Men's Association, the document called for parliamentary and electoral reforms that would make the system fairer to the working classes of Britain. The 1830s were a time of economic depression, falling living and working standards, and rising resentment at the lack of representation, which had only been intensified by the sense of betrayal at the Great Reform Act of 1832. This had been a major step in changing the system of rotten and pocket boroughs and had nearly doubled the electorate to around 18 per cent of adult men, but had failed to extend the vote to most of the working classes.

The People's Charter – announced at a meeting in Glasgow in front of an



THE

PEOPLE'S CHARTER;

BEING THE

OUTLINE OF AN ACT

TO PROVIDE FOR THE

JUST REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN

IN THE

COMMONS' HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT:

EMBRACING THE PRINCIPLES OF

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE,
NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION,
ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS,
EQUAL REPRESENTATION,
PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, AND VOTE BY BALLOT.

PREPARED BY A COMMITTEE OF TWELVE PERSONS, SIX MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND SIX MEMBERS OF THE LONDON WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION, AND ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

ABOVE: **Anger at the 1832 Reform Act led to mass demonstrations**

TOP LEFT: **The opening page of the People's Charter, which set out the Chartists' demands**

TOP RIGHT: **John Frost had to stand down as Newport's mayor for his support of Chartism**

> "The Chartists were unaware that a detachment of infantry and hundreds of special constables had been called in"

estimated 150,000 people – had six main aims. Firstly, Chartists demanded that the vote be given to all men over 21 (apart from those convicted of a felony or declared insane). Although some wanted to include women's suffrage in the charter, it was decided that this was a step too far.

A second demand was the creation of 300 equal electoral districts, each containing the same number of inhabitants and with no more than one representative from each district to sit in Parliament. Other points concerned those wishing to run for Parliament: the removal of property qualifications and the introduction of payment for MPs, both of which would allow men other than wealthy landowners to stand for election.

A further point on the Charter called for a secret ballot. At the time, voting was done in public simply by a show of hands, which meant voters could be intimidated or coerced into casting their ballot a certain way. The final demand was for annual parliamentary elections in order to prevent unpopular or corrupt governments from holding on to power.

PEOPLE POWER

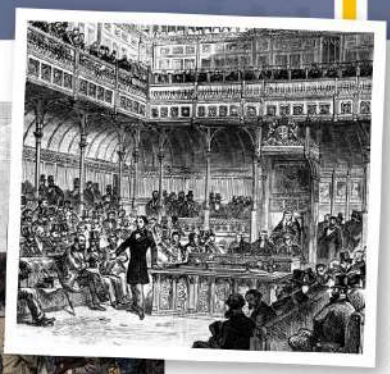
Chartism bloomed across Britain, with regular mass meetings and the radical press – notably *The Northern Star*, run by future Chartist leader Fergus O'Connor – espousing the movement's demands. The first petition supporting the Charter was delivered to Parliament in June 1839 with more than 1.3 million signatures. It was not even considered in Parliament.

Angered at being ignored, some Chartists started to believe that change could not be achieved through peaceful means ('moral force'), and some adopted a more militant approach ('physical force'). Some mass meetings turned violent when police tried to break them up, such as the 'Bull Ring riots' in Birmingham in July 1839, and Chartist leaders were arrested in droves. There were even plans for a nationwide uprising, but, in the end, it was only in Newport, South Wales, that people rose up.

On the night of 3 November 1839, tens of thousands of Chartists marched from the industrial towns of the Welsh valleys towards Newport. They were led by John Frost, the town's former mayor, who headed a group from the west. At the same time, a coal merchant named Zephaniah Williams and Pontypool watchmaker William Jones gathered men from the north.

The wet weather and tiring march meant not everyone completed the long journey to the Westgate Hotel, but the Chartists still numbered around 5,000; some carried guns, while others brought makeshift weapons and pitchforks. That should have been ample to liberate the prisoners being held at the hotel. The Chartists, however, were unaware that a detachment of infantry and hundreds of special constables had been called in by the town's mayor, Thomas Phillips.

As the Chartists gathered outside, a gun went off. Accounts suggest that it was a Chartist gun, possibly fired by accident. The soldiers fired into the ▶



ABOVE: **Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli introduces his 1867 Reform Act, giving the vote to some urban, working-class men**

LEFT: **The Chartists' demonstration on Kennington Common in 1848 would be the final time they tried to petition Parliament**

◀ crowd and mayhem ensued. In the half-hour 'battle', 22 Chartists died and many more were wounded. The Newport Rising had been extinguished.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

The incident was a tragedy and a disaster for the Welsh Chartists. Once they had thrown down their weapons, around 150 were arrested, including the three leaders. Frost, Williams and Jones were tried for high treason and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered – they were the last men in Britain to be issued this punishment – before a public outcry, and intervention by the Lord Chief Justice, saw their sentences commuted to transportation to Australia.

Among the working classes, the Chartists were held up as heroes, but they were condemned as dangerous criminals by the authorities. Mayor Phillips, who had been wounded in the fighting, was later knighted for his role in crushing the uprising. In 1856, the three leaders of the rising received total pardons: Williams and Jones remained in Australia, but Frost returned to Britain after his pardon, although he never lived in Newport again.

In the meantime, two more mass petitions had been presented to Parliament, in 1842 and 1848 – boasting around 3.3 million and 5.7 million signatures respectively – but with no success. Yet the desire for political change remained even after Chartism ended, and another Reform Act, in 1867, enfranchised a million urban, working-class men. In fact, all but one of the demands (the call for annual parliaments) listed in the People's Charter demands are now part of British law – albeit not all in the precise form in which they were demanded.

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

A LOOK BACK AT THREE OTHER EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN NOVEMBER THROUGHOUT HISTORY

9 November 1989

THE BERLIN WALL FALLS

Nearly 30 years after the German capital's partition, East Berlin's communist leaders announce that citizens are finally allowed to cross west. East Germans flock to the border and start demolishing the wall; a year later, East and West Germany are officially reunited.

18 November 1477

WISE WORDS IN ENGLISH

William Caxton prints *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, a translation of an Arabic compendium of words of wisdom. It is one of the first dated books to be printed in English.

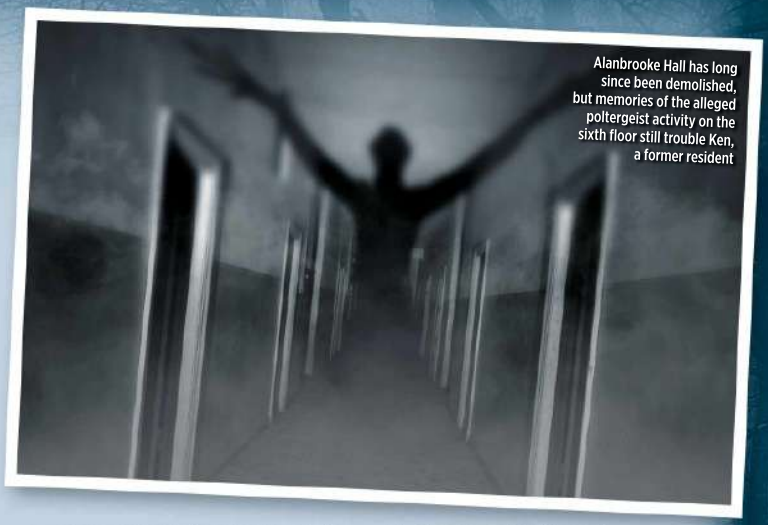
17 November 1558

ELIZABETH I ASCENDS

Queen Mary I dies childless at the age of 42, meaning her half-sister, Elizabeth, succeeds the throne. She will rule for more than 44 years.

GETTY IMAGES X5

BBC Radio's **Danny Robins** delves into the story of a 'shadowy figure' that wrought havoc in a Belfast university building and left students gripped with fear



Alanbrooke Hall has long since been demolished, but memories of the alleged poltergeist activity on the sixth floor still trouble Ken, a former resident

"I try to rationalise it, I can't. I have never experienced anything else like this in my life."

My favourite ghost stories are the ones told by people who don't believe ghosts exist. There's nothing more unsettling than a hardened sceptic who's witnessed something terrifying they cannot explain.

"There was a very strong sense of pure distilled evil coming from this figure."

Ken is a geneticist. He spends his days studying genomes, trying to work out the causes of diseases. He's used to rational scientific thought, but he's describing to me an experience that, on paper, is impossible; a tale of poltergeist activity and apparitions that could have leapt off the pages of an MR James ghost story.

Ken became a student in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the autumn of 1981, arriving in a city where the sectarian conflict known as the Troubles was still ongoing, providing a constant backdrop of bombings and attacks. His accommodation was an ugly tower block known as Alanbrooke Hall, sharing a room on the sixth floor: Room 6–11.

"It's been ingrained in my mind for a long time, that number," says Ken. He's in his 60s now, wearing glasses that remind me of Michael Caine. He's keen to emphasise how ordinary Room 6-11 was – "the last place in the world you'd expect anything to happen" – yet, on that winter night in 1981, as he settled down in bed, he turned to see a figure like a shadow come to life, the black silhouette of a man.

"I couldn't see any features; it was just the blackest black I've ever seen." As the figure advanced, Ken was struck by what he describes as a "force of nature", like waves of energy, a sensation of total evil.

I can see Ken realises how ridiculous this might sound. Perhaps he'd have dismissed it as some strange hallucination, except it heralded a sequence of bizarre poltergeist activity experienced both by him and his roommate over several months; heavy desk drawers opening by themselves, items moving inside cupboards, and pages of books turned by an invisible hand. Most terrifyingly, one night when Ken was reading, knowing he was entirely alone on the sixth floor, everybody else having gone home to their families for the weekend, there was a savage pounding on the door, threatening to break it off its hinges. Using every ounce of courage to open it, he discovered the corridor was totally empty.

FREAKED-OUT FRESHERS

Eventually, Ken decided to talk to the students who'd lived in the room the previous year. This is where the story gets really weird, because they had also experienced poltergeist activity, with books actually flying at them! When it was finally time for Ken to move out, he decided not to tell the new occupants what had happened to him. A few weeks later, the new guys sought him out to describe their experiences – even more frightening than Ken's!

So, what was it about Room 6-11 that terrified successive occupants? My inner psychotherapist wonders if the backdrop of the Troubles in Belfast helped stoke these feelings of fear and anxiety, yet the experiences these young science students described to each other feel utterly real and compelling. I'll be trying to solve the mystery in my new BBC Sounds series *Uncanny*, as I throw the investigation open to the public, searching for anyone else who had similar experiences in Alanbrooke Hall. Will we finally discover the truth behind 'the evil in Room 6–11'?

DANNY ROBINS is a writer, broadcaster and journalist. He has presented *The Battersea Poltergeist* for BBC Radio 4 and the podcast series *Haunted* for the Panoply Network

LISTEN

The story of Room 6–11 will appear in Danny's new BBC Sounds series, *Uncanny*, which launches on 20 October. Danny is also on tour around the UK with his Battersea Poltergeist Live show. Find out more at *batterseapoltergeistlive.com*

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Pyramids

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

WHAT WERE ANCIENT PYRAMIDS USED FOR AND WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?

Pyramids are monumental structures; giants of ancient architecture and engineering. The Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt, perhaps the most famous of them all, was the tallest human-made structure in the world for nearly four millennia, and is still standing strong.

Historically, pyramids were tombs and temples, centres of civilisation and symbols of ultimate power, even divinity. While Egypt is the country most associated with them, pyramids have been built across the globe, with examples found in the Americas – such as Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and the US – as well as China, India, Sudan, Cambodia, Greece, Italy and the Canary Islands.

The typical shape of a pyramid with a wide square base and four sloping triangular sides that meet at the top, although some have flat tops, means that they are extremely stable structures, which is why so many have survived for thousands of years.

WHAT IS THE OLDEST PYRAMID IN THE WORLD?

The Step Pyramid of Djoser in Egypt holds the record as the oldest stone pyramid still standing, dating to around 2650 BC. Archaeologists have suggested that structures in Peru, at the ruins of the city of Caral built by the Norte Chico people, are as old or even older, but they haven't been definitively dated.

Built at Saqqara, overlooking the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis, the Djoser pyramid was built as the tomb for the Third Dynasty pharaoh Djoser. Prior to this, pharaohs were typically buried in rectangular flat-roofed tombs, known as *mastabas*, but with the construction of Djoser's more spectacular resting place, royal funerary practices in Egypt rose to new heights, literally.

Its design was conceived by his *vizier*, Imhotep, who decided to stack *mastabas* on top of each other to create a six-layered, one-of-a-kind monument. It is thought to have represented Djoser's ascension from pharaoh to god. Imhotep was later deified himself, and clearly had a high standing within the royal court as his name was inscribed on a statue of Djoser within the pyramid.

The step pyramid built for pharaoh Djoser in Egypt is believed to be the oldest in the world

"The wide square base means they are extremely stable, which is why they have survived"

WHAT IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PYRAMID?

The pre-Colombian city of Cholula in Puebla, Mexico, houses the largest pyramid – by volume – in the world.

LEFT: **A model showing the scope of the mostly underground Great Pyramid of Cholula**

RIGHT: **The other – and more famous – Great Pyramid, at Giza**

With a square base of 450 metres each way, it is around twice the size of Giza's Great Pyramid, although much shorter. The entire complex covers almost 45 acres and, according to local mythology, was built by a giant. Its construction (by humans) is believed to have begun around 300 BC, and the city grew around it ▶

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

to a peak population of an estimated 100,000 people. Cholula would be one of the largest cities in the Aztec empire at the time of the Spanish conquest.

The pyramid, meanwhile, was added to over the centuries so that it is now essentially six pyramids on top of each other. By the time Hernán Cortés and co arrived in 1519, it had fallen into ruin and was covered in foliage and mud. The Spanish thought the summit of the pyramid was just a hill and decided it was the perfect location for a church.

WHICH COUNTRY BOASTS THE MOST PYRAMIDS?

Again, it might be easy to assume that the answer is Egypt, but Sudan actually has the most pyramids, boasting more than 250 known structures compared to Egypt's 138. The region of Nubia, which today covers Sudan and part of southern Egypt, was home to many empires and kingdoms, including the Kush, which ruled between c1070 BC to c350 AD. When Nubia was previously conquered by Egypt, its people adopted the pyramid style of building. The city of Meroë is home to 200 of Sudan's pyramids alone.

WHY WERE PYRAMIDS BUILT IN ANCIENT EGYPT?

From the success of Djoser's pyramid, pharaohs and royalty had to make sure they built themselves a suitably impressive tomb to see them off to the afterlife. Nobles also had pyramids of their own, but they were more modest.

The majority of Egyptian pyramids were built on the west bank of the Nile as this was closer to the setting Sun and, therefore, the realm of the dead. Symbolism was highly important when it came to pyramids; the triangular shape represented the rays of the Sun coming down to Earth. In the ancient Egyptian creation myth, the first part of the Earth to emerge from the primordial waters was a mound, which they called Benben, the same name given to the stone at the tip of each pyramid.

If size equalled importance, then no one topped the Fourth Dynasty pharaoh Khufu. He built the Great Pyramid at Giza in c2500 BC, which, at 147 metres, was the tallest structure in the world until the 14th century AD and the only ancient Wonder of the World still around.

HOW DID THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS BUILD THEIR PYRAMIDS...?

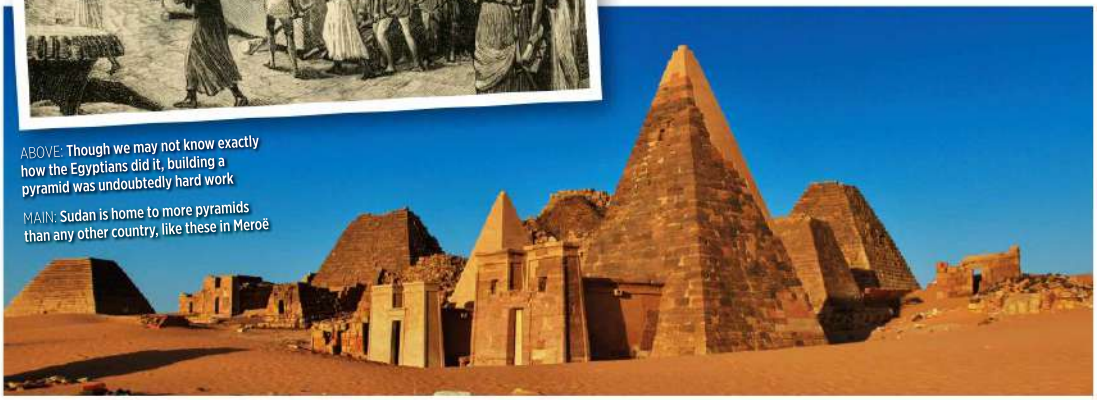
Archaeologists still aren't exactly certain how the Egyptians managed to build such monumental structures, as little evidence remains. It is believed that the Great Pyramid needed around 20 years and tens of thousands of workers to quarry, move and raise the 2.3 million blocks of stone required, each weighing several tonnes.

While most stones came from nearby quarries, it is thought that others came from more than 500 miles away. The Nile would have been used to transport them across the country, while wooden sledges, pulled by men and animals such as oxen, then dragged them to the construction site. Experts think that workers made huge ramps of rubble to raise the stones up the pyramid, which would be laid layer by layer, with each stone then set in place using wooden levers – far from easy, or quick, work. Polished blocks of limestone then covered the pyramid to reflect the Sun, but these are long gone.

... AND WHO BUILT THEM?

Traditionally, the way to explain the sheer scale of a pyramid's construction was that slaves were used in huge numbers. That theory goes back to the time of ancient Greek historian Herodotus and

"The ancient Egyptians used a form of labour tax where men would undertake construction work for the pharaoh"



ABOVE: Though we may not know exactly how the Egyptians did it, building a pyramid was undoubtedly hard work

MAIN: Sudan is home to more pyramids than any other country, like these in Meroë

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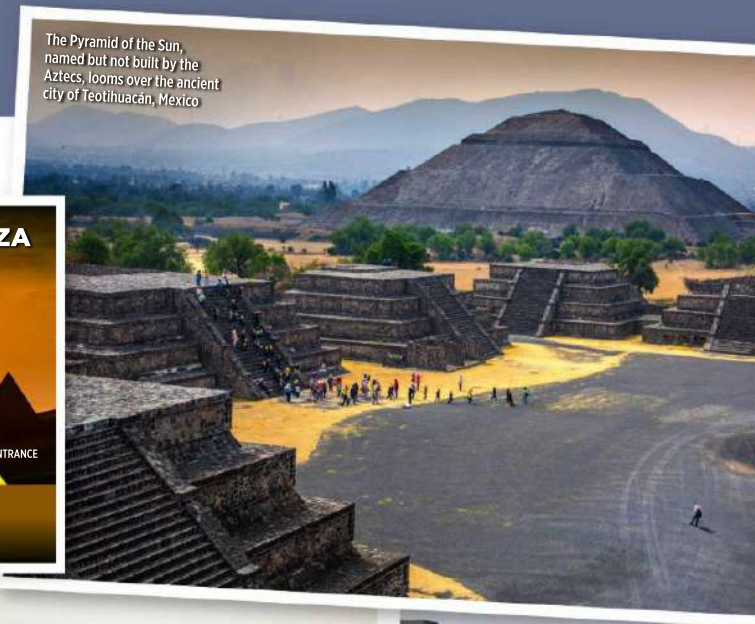

The Pyramid of the Sun, named but not built by the Aztecs, looms over the ancient city of Teotihuacán, Mexico

is still perpetuated in Hollywood movies. Yet the evidence clearly points to the fact that the Egyptians used a form of labour tax where men would undertake construction work for the pharaoh, similar to a form of national service.

Workers would be put into gangs and live in barracks with their families in a specially made town. Modern estimates suggest around 4,000 labourers built the Great Pyramid, aided by 15,000–20,000 others who built the ramps, made tools and provided workers with food.

WHAT'S INSIDE THE PYRAMIDS?

Contrary to what you may think, most of Egypt's pyramids are solid, with just a few tunnels and chambers. Much of the funerary complexes and burial chambers were built underneath. These would be full of carvings and paintings with spells that protected the tomb and its occupant. Many have not been fully explored.

WHY DID THE EGYPTIANS STOP BUILDING PYRAMIDS?

By the time of the New Kingdom (c1540 to 1075 BC), Egyptians were burying their pharaohs not in pyramids, but in tombs cut into valleys. The most famous is the Valley of the Kings, final resting place of Tutankhamun. It's thought this move was done – as well as saving resources and time – to deter grave robbers. Hidden, underground tombs were far less inviting than grand pyramids to a prospective thief.

WHAT WERE PYRAMIDS IN THE AMERICAS LIKE?

Pyramids in the Americas are mostly found in Mesoamerican cultures, such as the Olmec, Maya and Aztecs. Unlike their Egyptian counterparts, many had flat tops and steps – a key difference as they were used as temples, not tombs. Rather than solid stone, these pyramids were generally earth mounds with a stone structure built on top. While the Mayan Chichén Itzá is perhaps the most famous, one of the largest is the Pyramid of the Sun, built in around AD 200 by the Teotihuacán in Mexico.

As for North America, the largest is Monks Mound at Cahokia, Illinois. The giant earthwork, 300 metres long, was built in the 10th century AD by the Mississippians, a Native American civilisation that thrived in what is today the eastern and southern US. It was used as a burial mound as well as a foundation for buildings.

TOP LEFT: **A diagram showing the (known) chambers and tunnels of the Great Pyramid**

ABOVE LEFT: **An earthwork pyramid at Cahokia – one of the few in the US**

ABOVE RIGHT: **Visitors to the Louvre Museum in Paris are greeted by a modern version of an ancient marvel**

WHAT ARE SOME THEORIES SURROUNDING PYRAMIDS?

From Egyptian curses to the intervention of giants or aliens, pyramids have always attracted outlandish theories. In 2013, two German amateur archaeologists visited the Great Pyramid to prove their idea that it had been built by the people of Atlantis. They were arrested for vandalising the monument.

ARE THERE MODERN PYRAMIDS?

The mystery and grandeur of pyramids continues to appeal in the present day, and many modern monuments and buildings have adopted the iconic design. In Las Vegas, the Luxor Hotel and Casino not only looks like an Egyptian pyramid and is named after the city that was Thebes, but it also has a Sphinx, too.

In 1988, a remodelling project of the Louvre in Paris saw the addition of a large glass pyramid at the entrance, to the criticism of some who felt it clashed with the rest of the museum's Renaissance architecture.

LISTEN

BBC WORLD SERVICE

The Great Pyramid of Giza is discussed in an episode of *The Forum*: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cszjvs*

Alfred the Great's battles with the Vikings

Unfairly remembered for a story concerning burnt cakes, King Alfred fought an against-the-odds campaign to keep Wessex out of enemy hands. But does he deserve the sobriquet 'the Great'?

Poor Alfred. The not-insignificant achievements of one of the most important Saxon kings have, largely thanks to primary school history lessons, never got much of a look-in when it comes to the nation's collective knowledge of him. Instead, he's often regarded as little more than a forgetful monarch, on account of his limited culinary expertise.

That he's simply remembered as someone who, perhaps, allowed some cakes to burn is an injustice. For starters, it ignores the context of the possibly apocryphal story; that his forgetfulness was due to his brain being otherwise engaged on how to save England from Viking rule. Secondly, that – against seemingly impossible odds – he did indeed protect his country from Danish control.

Born sometime between AD 847 and 849, Alfred was the youngest of the five sons of King Æthelwulf of Wessex and his wife Osburh. Three of his elder brothers – Æthelbald, Æthelberht and Æthelred – served as king before Alfred reached the throne in 871. There was no gentle easing into the job. Six years earlier, the Danes – led by the fantastically named Ivar the Boneless – had invaded England and taken hold of East Anglia and Northumbria. They had designs on Wessex, which meant wresting control of it from Alfred.

BRAINS OVER BRAWN

Just a month after taking the throne, the new king suffered a heavy defeat near Salisbury. Forced to make peace with the Danes, Alfred almost certainly paid them to withdraw to London. That was far from the end of the story, though. Five years later, and now led by their new leader Guthrum, the Danes returned to Wessex. They captured and blockaded the town of Wareham, which Alfred was powerless to overcome. A peace was brokered, based on the exchange of hostages, but the Danes – despite swearing an oath – killed their hostages and fled to Exeter.

A Victorian statue of King Alfred stands in the marketplace in Wantage, Oxfordshire, where the Saxon ruler was born

Fortunately, Alfred outmanoeuvred them. After besieging the city, he forced the Danes to submit and return to Mercia, the region to the north of Wessex. It was another example of a king who was keener to use brain than brawn.

In 878, the Danes attacked Chippenham, the location of Alfred's royal court. Many were slaughtered, but Alfred's wife and children were spared, while Alfred himself fled. With a small band of loyalists, the king went into hiding in the Somerset Levels. As his biographer Asser reported, here the king "was leading in great tribulation an unquiet life among the woodlands and swamps of Somersetshire; for he had nothing that he needed except what by frequent sallies he could forage openly or stealthily from the heathen or from the Christians who had submitted to the rule of the heathen".

It was during this time in Somerset that the incident with the cakes allegedly happened. The story goes that, in return for shelter provided by a peasant woman, he was charged with looking after her baking while she searched for firewood. But his mind was focused on tactics to overcome the Danes and the cakes were neglected.

There's no record of this in Asser's writings; indeed, the first time the tale was committed to the written word was 100 years after Alfred's death, so eat those cakes with a little salt.

PEACE AND REFORM

After a few months of ruminating on his plans and recruiting manpower, Alfred's men defeated Guthrum's Great Heathen Army at the battle of Edington. From there, they headed north to Chippenham where they starved their foes into submission. The terms of the subsequent Treaty of Wedmore dictated that Guthrum and around 30 of his men be baptised and converted to Christianity. Guthrum, rechristened Æthelstan, also became Alfred's godson. The later Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum dealt with the future rule of England. The pair divided up the kingdom of Mercia, which was effectively split in two. Under the system known as Danelaw, Alfred ruled the western portion of the country and Guthrum the eastern side.

Having rescued England from overall Viking control, Alfred set about his domestic agenda. This included the restoration of ravaged towns and cities, the teaching of the English language in all the court schools he established, and the drawing-up of a 120-chapter code of law based on Saxon legal edicts, Christian law and his own observations. But it wasn't a period of total peace. After Guthrum's death in 890, a string of Danish pretenders eager to fill the vacancy launched sorties from across the North Sea, which needed repelling.

Alfred himself died in 899, having left at least half his country still in Saxon hands. Although it wouldn't be bestowed on him until the 16th century, this was a king who certainly earned the epithet 'the Great'. He saved his nation.

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

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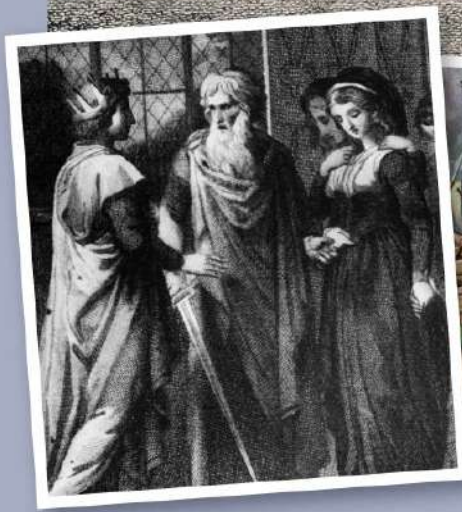
A 19th-century image depicts King Alfred drawing the ire of a peasant woman for accidentally burning her cakes. In reality, there is little proof the incident really took place

"The first time the tale of the cakes was committed to the written word was 100 years after the king's death"



LEFT: Alfred's men are shown defeating a fleet of Danish longboats. Viking attacks were a regular occurrence throughout the king's reign

FAR LEFT: The ruler (*left*) depicted with his Mercian wife, Ealhswith, whom he married in 868. They are known to have had at least five children together

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YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE WARS OF THE ROSES

Never before had England seen a conflict that split the nation so dramatically than during the mid to late 15th century, when two dynastic houses clashed in the Wars of the Roses. The weak rule and eventual incapacitation of King Henry VI had allowed his rivals to step up and claim the throne, launching a series of wars still remembered as one of the bloodiest chapters in England's history.

York and Lancaster – two branches of the royal house of Plantagenet, which had ruled since 1154 – tore the country apart for more than three decades. Kings were ousted and killed, dynasties begun and ripped down, and countless slaughtered in the name of the red and white roses. Yet from the chaos and turmoil emerged a new dynasty: the Tudors.

With the help of expert Lauren Johnson, we chart this period of English history from its beginnings through to the horrific battles, stunning betrayals and gruesome murders. Turn the page to uncover key dates in this bitter conflict for power...

30 Wars of the Roses timeline
An overview of the key events as kings were made, unmade, and made again

32 Plantagenet family tree
How England's ruling dynasty was uprooted by the fractious and intertwined houses of York and Lancaster

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Lauren Johnson answers our questions about the conflict and people involved

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A look at some of the most surprising facts about the two warring houses

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How did the three York brothers go from allies to rivals?

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The man who became the real power behind the throne – for both sides

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The battles may have been fought and won by men, but women were some of the major players

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From Blore Heath to Towton, explore the engagements that defined the wars

48 Richard III's last stand
The battle of Bosworth saw the rivalry between York and Lancaster come to an end with a victory by the unlikely Henry Tudor

50 Mysteries of the Wars of the Roses
Dan Jones explores some of the conflict's unsolved conundrums

54 The Princes in the Tower
Why the disappearance of Edward V and his younger brother still intrigues historians, more than 500 years on

LAUREN JOHNSON is a historian, writer and an expert in 15th and 16th-century history. Her books include *Shadow King: The Life and Death of Henry VI* (Head of Zeus, 2019). Lauren's new biography of Margaret Beaufort will be published next year by Head of Zeus

THE WARS THAT DIVIDED A NATION

1 SEP 1422

▼ The nine-month-old Henry VI ascends the throne after the death of his father, Henry V. A regency council will rule England until he comes of age, in 1437.

12 JUL 1450

A rebellion against the king's government, widely seen as corrupt, is suppressed, but Richard, 3rd Duke of York – the king's cousin with a stronger (through primogeniture) claim to the throne – emerges as leader of the opposition, pressing for political power.

19 OCT 1453

▲ The Hundred Years' War between England and France ends with the loss of all English territory in France, except Calais.

22 MAY 1455

▶ Richard, 3rd Duke of York and the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, angered at being excluded from a council of nobles, defeat a royal army at St Albans and capture the king. York is appointed lord protector, a position he has previously held while Henry VI has been incapacitated.

3 OCT 1470

▲ Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, allies with Warwick, forcing Edward IV to flee into exile. Henry VI is restored to the throne.

24 JUL 1469

◀ At the battle of Edgcote, a rebel force loyal to Warwick defeats a royal army. Edward IV is captured and imprisoned soon after the battle, but is released after a few months. His father-in-law, Richard Woodville (*pictured*), and brother-in-law, John, are executed.

13 JUL 1465

▼ Henry VI is captured again and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

15 MAY 1464

Lancastrian resistance in the north of England ends at the battle of Hexham. Most of the leaders are executed, including the Duke of Somerset; Henry VI goes on the run.

GETTY IMAGES X10, ALAMY X4

14 APR 1471

Having returned to England and taken London without opposition, Edward IV triumphs at the battle of Barnet. Warwick is killed.

4 MAY 1471

▼ Edward defeats Margaret of Anjou's army at the battle of Tewkesbury. Henry VI's son, also Edward, is killed and a few weeks later, Henry dies in the Tower of London in highly suspicious circumstances. Around this time, Henry Tudor flees to France as one of the last surviving Lancastrian claimants.

18 FEB 1478

George, Duke of Clarence – tried and convicted for treason against his own brother, the restored Edward IV – is privately executed.

9 APR 1483

On Edward IV's death, 12-year-old Edward V becomes king, with his uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, serving as protector. The young king and his brother, Richard of Shrewsbury, are placed in the Tower, allegedly to prepare for the coronation.

6 JUL 1483

▶ Edward V and his siblings are declared illegitimate, and Richard III is crowned. This summer will be the last time the 'Princes in the Tower' are seen.

Kings were made, undone, and made again as the red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York fought for the English throne

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

28 JAN 1457

▶ Henry Tudor (the future Henry VII) is born at Pembroke Castle to 13-year-old Margaret Beaufort (*right*), a descendant of Edward III and widow of Henry VI's half-brother.

12 OCT 1459

An outnumbered Yorkist army assembles at Ludford Bridge, but York, Salisbury and Warwick abandon their men after one of their commanders (along with his troops) defects to Henry VI.

10 JUL 1460

▼ At the battle of Northampton, which lasts just 30 minutes, Henry VI is captured by Warwick and the Earl of March (the future Edward IV).

10 OCT 1460

York enters Parliament and lays claim to the throne, but the nobles are reluctant to depose the king. A compromise is reached with the Act of Accord, which declares that Henry VI will remain king and York will be his successor.

30 DEC 1460

▼ Opposing the Act of Accord, Lancastrian forces gather in the north and York is killed. Others slain include his son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, and the Earl of Salisbury.

2 FEB 1461

The Yorkists win a decisive victory at the battle of Mortimer's Cross, which sees Edward (the future king) block Lancastrian reinforcements from Wales.

17 FEB 1461

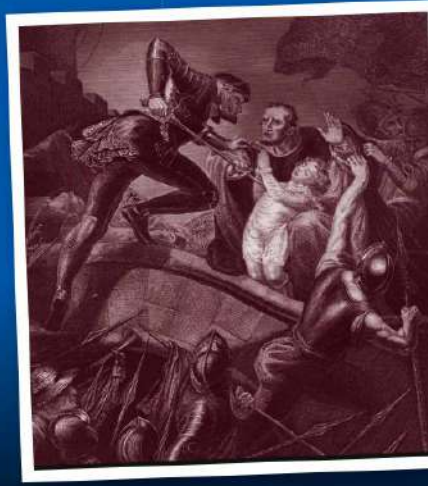
Lancastrian forces, led by Henry's wife Margaret of Anjou, rescue the king at St Albans. They march on London, but the city bars the gates and they are forced to head north.

29 MAR 1461

▼ Having been proclaimed king on 4 March, the armies of Edward IV defeat the Lancastrians at Towton – one of the largest and longest battles ever fought on British soil.

1 MAY 1464

▲ The traditional date given for the marriage of Edward IV and Lancastrian widow Elizabeth Woodville.



16 JUN 1487

The Wars of the Roses come to an end at the battle of Stoke Field. The Yorkist supporters – led by Richard III's nephew, John de la Pole, and with the pretender Lambert Simnel as their figurehead – are beaten by Henry VII. ⊙

18 JAN 1486

▲ The houses of Lancaster and York are united by the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV.

22 AUG 1485

Henry Tudor – who, despite a weak claim to the throne, is the best Lancastrian hope – returns to England with an army and defeats Richard III at the battle of Bosworth Field. Later that year, he is crowned Henry VII, beginning the Tudor dynasty.

THE SPLIT OF THE PLANTAGENETS

And you thought your family drama was complicated...

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

Philippa of Hainault
Acted as regent during the Hundred Years' War

EDWARD III *r1327–77*
Ruled for 50 years, but his sons fought for his throne

Isabella of Castile
Great-grandmother of the two Yorkist kings

Edmund of Langley
1st Duke of York
Founder of the house of York

Blanche of Lancaster
Marriage led to her husband taking the duchy of Lancaster

John of Gaunt
Duke of Lancaster
Effectively regent for his nephew, Richard II

Katherine Swynford
The Duke's mistress, then wife, whose children were legitimised

Joan of Kent
Known as the 'Fair Maid'

Edward the Black Prince
Heir apparent of Edward III, but died before his father

The Beaufort family
Chief Lancastrian supporters of Henry VI

RICHARD II
r1377–1399
Ascended at the age of 10, and usurped by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke

Mary de Bohun
Died before her husband came to the throne

HENRY IV
Bolingbroke *r1399–1413*
The first of the Lancastrian kings

Edward
2nd Duke of York
Served under three kings until his death at Agincourt

Richard
Earl of Cambridge
Executed for his part in a plot against Henry V

HENRY V
r1413–22
Victor of the battle of Agincourt

Catherine of Valois
Princess of France
Mother of a Lancastrian king and grandmother of a Tudor king

Owen Tudor
A lowly servant when he married the dowager queen

Richard
3rd Duke of York
Attacked Henry VI, starting the Wars of the Roses

Cecily Neville
Aunt of the 'Kingmaker', Richard Neville

HENRY VI
r1422–61
r1470–71
Twice overthrown by Edward IV

Margaret of Anjou
Henry's indomitable queen who led the Lancastrians while her husband was incapacitated

Richard Neville
16th Earl of Warwick
The so-called 'Kingmaker', he helped Edward IV take the throne for York then defected to Henry VI and the Lancastrians

HOUSE OF YORK

EDWARD IV
r1461–70
r1471–83
Deposed Henry VI; was briefly overthrown but retook the throne

Elizabeth Woodville
Widow of a Lancastrian knight before marrying the Yorkist, Edward

RICHARD III
r1483–85
The last of the Plantagenet kings

Anne Neville
The Kingmaker's daughter, died shortly before Richard

Edward
Prince of Wales
Killed aged 17 at the battle of Tewkesbury

Edward
Prince of Wales
Died at the age of 10

Margaret Beaufort
A descendant of Edward III; worked tirelessly to see her son crowned

Edmund Tudor
Earl of Richmond
Second of Margaret Beaufort's four husbands

EDWARD V
Usurped by his uncle, Richard, and disappeared in the Tower of London

Richard
Duke of York
The second of the Princes in the Tower

Elizabeth of York
Offered in marriage to unite York and Lancaster

HENRY VII
r1485–1509
Seized the throne at the battle of Bosworth Field

HOUSE OF TUDOR

PLEASE NOTE: NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE FAMILY TREE

GETTY IMAGES X8, ALAMY X4

A c1908 work by Henry Payne depicts Richard, Duke of York (*in red*) challenging Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset to choose between the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WARS OF THE ROSES

Lauren Johnson answers key questions about the 15th-century clashes between the houses of Lancaster and York

Q: What was the relationship like between the houses of Lancaster and York before the Wars of the Roses?

A: It was fairly congenial. I think one of the most amazing things in 15th-century history is that King Henry VI, despite being a baby when he inherited the throne, was supported by virtually all the nobility, including people who had a better claim to the throne than him, of which you could definitely include the house of York. Richard, Duke of York appeared to be a loyal supporter of Henry VI for many years until around 1450, when things started to go a bit pear-shaped.

The York family did have a bit of a history of rebelling against the Lancastrians, though. In 1415, just before Henry V's victory at Agincourt, Richard's father – Richard of Conisburgh, Earl of Cambridge – was involved in a treasonous plot against the king, and this led to the complete downfall of the York family for a while. So, the notion of the York family having a special place in the politics of the Lancastrian dynasty goes much further back than the Wars of the Roses. And there are probably some questions about the loyalty of the wider York family, including Richard, Duke of York.

Q: Would people at the time have referred to the conflict as the 'Wars of the Roses'?

A: In recent years there's been a bit of a move against using Wars of the Roses as the terminology for this war. Historical fiction author Philippa Gregory refers to it as the Cousins' War, and that's

Henry V, shown here at the battle of Agincourt, was a warrior king in whose footsteps his peace-loving son, Henry VI, struggled to follow

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X1

become quite popular – you can see why, given the number of distant cousins who were involved. But no one at the time would have called it the Cousins' War, whereas the idea of two different dynasties represented by roses can be seen in the 15th century – although the term Wars of the Roses only came to be widely used in the early 19th century.

The future Edward IV was known as the Rose of Rouen, because he was born in Rouen in Normandy and his family symbol was the white rose. There are ballads from the 1460s that address him as such, describing England as a garden with the rose planted in it. So, the rose imagery was there very early on.

Perhaps the most important person in terms of creating the idea of the Wars of the Roses was Henry VII, who was himself effectively Lancastrian, and who married a princess of the house of York, thus uniting the roses. He put the Tudor rose – a combination of red and white roses – everywhere, and this imagery was also favoured by his son, Henry VIII, when he came to the throne in 1509.

Q: Was Henry VI's weakness as a king to blame for the Wars of the Roses?

A: In large part, yes. But Richard, Duke of York has to take some of the blame, too. Henry VI was just not the sort of king that was needed at that moment in time. He grew up in the huge shadow of his warrior father, Henry V, whom he never met, so he never had an example of kingship in front of him. By contrast, Richard, Duke of York was much more of a medieval king prototype – he'd seen battle, experienced government and married young. And I think, partly because of the slight taint on the Yorkist line after questions of treason in the past, Richard was very touchy about matters of personal honour and was very concerned that he should have a specific role in government, which elevated him above other people around him. He was also very aware that he was effectively Henry's heir for a long time, until Henry had a child of his own.

The personalities of Henry VI and Richard, Duke of York were entirely at odds with one another. Henry was peace-loving, compliant and afraid of confrontation, while York was a very strident, ambitious, confrontational individual who was perfectly willing to use violence to get what he wanted. And what happens throughout the 1450s, I would argue, is that York keeps pushing himself forward to have a leading role in government and Henry keeps trying to bat him away by one means after another. But York refuses to be sidelined. I think it's this personality clash that is the most important factor in creating the Wars of the Roses.

Q: How involved was the average person in the conflict?

A: It's a tricky question to answer. On the one hand, there would have been the big question of theoretical loyalty to a monarch who, it was believed, was divinely appointed, and on the other, there was the reality of day-to-day life. I think most people's lives were really determined by who their local power broker was – usually a nobleman or woman, or their retainers, and the people in their employ who administered justice and law and order in the local area, collecting taxes, rents and so on. If you had a good lord, you'd probably be quite willing to go and fight for him. But if you had a bad lord, you might even take the opportunity to rid yourself of him – as happened to the Earl of Salisbury, who was murdered by a mob in Pontefract after the battle of Wakefield, in 1460. Personal feelings about local power holders were hugely important.

ABOVE: **The level of involvement for ordinary people in the Wars of the Roses depended a great deal on where they lived**

LEFT: **Henry VI was widely regarded as a weak king who avoided confrontation**

"HENRY VI GREW UP IN THE SHADOW OF HIS WARRIOR FATHER"

A 1486 image of the coat of arms of Henry VII, supported by angels and featuring both white and red roses

Where you lived in England would also have had a huge impact on how involved you were in the conflict. If you lived in London, you would probably have been quite involved in the wars because that was the place of power, where people were imprisoned in the Tower; where monarchs were crowned, where lots of armour and weaponry was kept, and so on. Control of London was hugely important throughout the conflict, as was the loyalty of Londoners, who tended to be Yorkist.

If you lived in the West Country or in the northeast of England, you would probably have had quite a hard time because there was a huge amount of local feuding between lords. Ordinary people in those areas would probably have spent a lot of time fighting. By contrast, if you lived in the middle of Wales, for example, you could have probably ignored the conflict altogether.

Q: What is your view of Richard III?

A: I'm sure many people will disagree with me, but my personal view of Richard is not tremendously positive. While he was very similar to a lot of other noble people in his time, he was also worse than many of them, which is why he has such a bad reputation. For instance, he and his brother, George, Duke of Clarence, declared their own mother-in-law, Anne de Beauchamp, legally dead so that they could take her lands, which wasn't the nicest thing to do!

Richard, also, before he became king, intimidated the 60-something Countess of Oxford by threatening to march her off

ALAMY X6

to the north of England in the middle of winter to get hold of her lands and those of her son, who was a Lancastrian exile at that point.

I think it is also extremely likely that the Princes in the Tower were killed on Richard's orders – though probably not by his own hand – and that his involvement in their deaths was suspected from extremely early on. Richard was crowned on 6 July 1483, but there had already been a rising against him in June that year, as well as in July and again in August. And there was an enormous rebellion against him in October 1483. So there was definitely a sense that there was something not quite right about the means by which he had taken power.

Q: Did Richard III's scoliosis affect how he was viewed at court and elsewhere, or was his disability played up by Tudor propaganda?

A: This is an area that is so frustrating, because it would be brilliant to be able to answer the question more fully. And we can't really, because strangely no one at the time really mentions Richard's scoliosis, which, thanks to examination of his skeleton, we now know he had.

Shakespeare famously described Richard III as having a "hunchback" with a withered arm and a limp, but we can't be completely certain how much his scoliosis would have affected his physical appearance. It's probably fair to say that he had one shoulder visibly higher than the other. Interestingly, 15th-century historian and priest John Rous did, in the early 1490s, describe Richard as being "small of stature, with a short face and unequal shoulders, the right higher and the left lower", but for a long time his comments were assumed to be part of negative propaganda against Richard.

In fairness, Rous did also write some strange things about Richard, including that he was "retained within his mother's womb for two years, emerging with teeth and hair to his shoulders".

It's also possible that Richard's disability wasn't obvious to the people around him. This was an era when padded shoulders were in fashion, so his clothes and armour may well have been manufactured in such a way that they hid his scoliosis and uneven shoulders. Certainly, we know that Richard fought in battles from his early to mid-teens, and was often described as being a noble warrior and a brave fighter, right up to his death at Bosworth Field in 1485.

A 19th-century depiction of Richard III and his wife, Anne. As was popular after his death, Richard is portrayed as hunched and stooping

Laurence Olivier stars as Richard III in Shakespeare's play of the same name. The playwright portrayed the Yorkist king as both a complex and evil character

Margaret Beaufort played a key role in getting her son, Henry Tudor, on the throne

Q: Has Margaret Beaufort's role in Henry Tudor's rise been overexaggerated?

A: I don't think so. She is phenomenally important to the story and, crucially, she was the one in 1483–85, during Richard III's reign, who was pushing for Henry to be included in the various political machinations that were going on. Margaret was also the one who made an alliance with Edward IV's widow, Elizabeth Woodville, which hinged on Henry Tudor marrying Elizabeth's daughter, Elizabeth of York. And that won over many Woodville supporters, Yorkist supporters, and supporters of Edward IV to Henry's cause. Of course, Margaret couldn't fight; no women in the Wars of the Roses that we know of fought in battle. But she did a huge amount in terms of raising money and making political alliances.

INTERVIEW: KEV LOCHUN
WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

GET HOOKED

READ

Lauren Johnson is a historian, writer and an expert in 15th and 16th-century history. Her new biography of Margaret Beaufort will be published next year by Head of Zeus

FIVE THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT...

THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK

Kathryn Warner reveals family secrets from the two rival Plantagenet houses – before they went to war

1 THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER IS OLDER THAN YORK

The house of Lancaster was founded in 1267, almost 200 years before the Wars of the Roses began. King Henry III created the earldom of Lancaster for his second son, Edmund Crouchback, who was also Earl of Leicester and held the lands of Derby, too. In turn, Edmund's son, Thomas, picked up the titles of the Earl of Lincoln and Salisbury through marriage, making him one of the most powerful noblemen in England.

The house of York was more than a century younger than Lancaster, being established in 1385 when Richard II created the dukedom of York for his uncle, Edmund of Langley. Edmund's son, Edward, died at Agincourt without an heir, so the title passed to Edward's nephew, Richard, who would take on Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses.

ABOVE: **Henry III created the earldom of Lancaster**

RIGHT: **Over 100 years later, Richard II followed with the dukedom of York**

2 EDMUND CROUCHBACK, THE FIRST EARL OF LANCASTER, WAS NOT HUNCHBACKED

The founder of the house of Lancaster, Edmund, has often been known by his nickname 'Crouchback', but it is a myth that this means 'crooked back', as has been suggested throughout history, and that Edmund was hunchbacked.

The name dates to sometime in the late 14th century, almost a century after Edmund's death in 1296 – a time when the legend that he was physically disabled came in handy for his great-great-grandson and heir Henry IV when claiming the throne from Richard II in 1399. The story went that Edmund was in fact older than his brother Edward I, but had been passed over by his father, Henry III, in the succession to the throne as a result of his disability.

If true, this would have made all the kings of England from 1272 onwards – Edward I, Edward II, Edward III and Richard II – usurpers on the throne. As everyone, including Henry IV himself, knew perfectly well, though, this story was nonsense. Edmund of Lancaster, born 1245, was five and a half years younger than his brother Edward.

Another theory as to why Edmund was known as 'Crouchback' refers to his participation in the Ninth Crusade to the Holy Land in the early 1270s. The word 'crouch' may have been a corruption of 'cross' or 'crossed' – a reference to the cross that crusaders wore on the back of their tunics. However, this simply seems to be a modern myth to explain the name. While Edmund did go on crusade, so did his brother Edward, his cousin Henry of Almain and numerous other English and European noblemen of the era – and none of them gained the name 'crossed back'. Edmund was certainly pious, founding a religious house in London in 1293 (the Minoresses without Aldgate), though there seems little reason to suppose that he was any more pious than anyone else in a devout era.

RIGHT: **The story of the hunchback was useful in Henry IV's overthrow of Richard II**

FAR RIGHT: **An illustration of Edmund Crouchback's monument – minus hunchback**

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X7

3 LANCASTER FOUGHT WITH THE KING OVER A CENTURY BEFORE THE WARS OF THE ROSES

The second Earl of Lancaster, Thomas – also Earl of Leicester, Derby, Lincoln and Salisbury – spent many years at odds with his first cousin, Edward II. Although he had been one of Edward's supporters, serving at the coronation in 1308, Thomas became a leader of the baronial opposition to the Crown out of personal ambition and a hatred for the king's favourite (and, possibly, lover), Piers Gaveston. Thomas was chiefly responsible for Gaveston's death in 1312.

For years, the two cousins marched around the kingdom with armed forces and battled for control of the government. In 1317, Thomas even led his men onto the battlements of his castle at Pontefract to jeer at Edward II as he and his retinue rode past.

The king finally won the struggle in March 1322 when he had Thomas executed for treason outside Pontefract Castle. Thomas was the first English earl to be executed since William the Conqueror had Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria, beheaded in 1076 (with the possible exception of Gaveston, who may have been Earl of Cornwall). Thomas' titles and lands were initially forfeited upon his execution, but his younger brother was eventually allowed to take possession of the earldom of Lancaster.

Shortly after his death, Thomas came to be seen as an unofficial martyr and saint in Yorkshire after miracles were reported at his tomb, with the site becoming a place of pilgrimage for more than 200 years until the Reformation.

LEFT: **The ruins of the keep at Pontefract Castle, where Thomas gave the king a rude welcome**

BELOW: **Thomas, master of five earldoms, was powerful enough to take on a king**

4 THE FIRST DUCHESS OF YORK AND THE THIRD DUCHESS OF LANCASTER WERE SPANISH SISTERS

Constanza and Isabella were the daughters of the king of Castile and León, Pedro – who is known as both 'the Cruel' and 'the Just' – and his mistress María de Padilla. He had been betrothed to Edward III's daughter Joan, but she died of the Black Death in the summer of 1348 near Bordeaux, while on her way to marry him. Five years later, Pedro wed the 14-year-old French noblewoman Blanche de Bourbon, although within days of the wedding he repudiated and imprisoned her so that he could go off with María.

The unfortunate Blanche, Queen of Castile in name only, died in 1361 after eight years in captivity, and Pedro's daughters with María were legitimised. When Pedro was deposed and killed by his half-brother in 1369, Constanza and Isabella moved to England and married Edward III's third and fourth sons, John of Gaunt and Edmund of Langley, in 1371 and 1372 respectively. Isabella, the first Duchess of York, would be the great-grandmother of the Yorkist kings Edward IV and Richard III.

RIGHT: **Constanza's marriage to John of Gaunt led to the Duke of Lancaster claiming, unsuccessfully, the kingdom of Castile**

FAR RIGHT: **Isabella married John's brother Edmund, making her both sisters and sisters-in-law with Constanza**

Constance of York's granddaughter Anne Neville with her husband, King Richard III

5 CONSTANCE OF YORK GAVE BIRTH TO AN ILLEGITIMATE DAUGHTER

The only daughter of the first Duke and Duchess of York, Edmund of Langley and Isabella of Castile, was named Constance. In 1379, she was married while still a young child to Thomas Despenser, heir of the powerful Despenser family and a descendant of Edward I.

Thomas was a staunch ally of Richard II during his reign in the last decades of the 14th century, and ended up being summarily beheaded in January 1400 after taking part in the Epiphany Rising, a plot to restore the deposed Richard and kill the new king, Henry IV. Six and a half months after his death, Constance gave birth to a daughter, Isabel Despenser.

Some years later, Constance began an affair with, and was possibly betrothed to, the young Earl of Kent, Edmund Holland, which resulted in the birth of her second – but this time illegitimate – daughter, Alianore Holland, in about 1405. Alianore would go on to marry James Tuchet, Lord Audley, and lay claim as the rightful heir of her father. Edmund had died in 1408 without legitimate children, but his sisters and their children firmly rejected Alianore's claim.

As for her legitimate half-sister, Isabel Despenser married twice, firstly to the Earl of Worcester, with whom she had a daughter named Elizabeth before he died in 1422 fighting the French, and secondly to the Earl of Warwick. Her husbands were first cousins, and both named Richard Beauchamp. Via her second marriage, which resulted in two children, Isabel would be the grandmother of Richard III's queen, Anne Neville.

KATHRYN WARNER is a historian and author. Her forthcoming biography, *John of Gaunt: Son of One King, Father of Another*, published by Amberley, will be available in January 2022

LEFT TO RIGHT: **Brothers Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III), George, Duke of Clarence, and Edward, Earl of March (later Edward IV) had a far from stable relationship**

FRATERNAL FRICTION

King Edward IV and his younger brothers, George and Richard, were supposed to be united against the Lancastrian cause. But the three Yorkist siblings were ultimately divided by intense jealously, distrust and delusion

On the morning of 2 February 1461, in a field in Herefordshire, the Sun began to peek over the easterly horizon. But this was no ordinary sunrise. This was a parhelion, a vision where the low Sun appears to reveal itself in triplicate.

Many of those witnessing the phenomenon in this particular corner of the English countryside on this particular morning were mildly terrified at the sight. The witnesses were there in their thousands, soldiers in the service of the Yorkist claimant to the throne – Edward, Earl of March – ready to go into battle against the Lancastrian forces of Owen and Jasper Tudor. The 18-year-old Edward, so the story goes, interpreted the parhelion more positively. One theory was that it was a manifestation of the Holy Trinity and thus indicated that God was on the side of the house of York. It was certainly what he told his troops; in the words of the historical author Philippa Gregory, Edward was "quick-witted enough to assure his army that it foretold their victory".

Another interpretation was that the triple Sun appearing at Mortimer's Cross that morning represented the three surviving sons of Richard, Duke of York, killed in battle fewer than two months earlier. It was evidence of the manifest

ALAMY X4, BRIDGEMAN X1, GETTY X1

destiny of Edward, Richard's eldest son and heir, in seeking the crown, and of the future strength and resilience of his then-pre-pubescent brothers George, Duke of Clarence, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

At least, they *should* have been a resilient triumvirate. As the *Crowland Chronicle* later observed, the three brothers "possessed such surpassing talent that, if they have been able to avoid conflict, their triple bond could have been broken only with the utmost difficulty". Ultimately, though, this bond was broken by the brothers themselves. The house of Lancaster and the new Tudor dynasty would claim victory at Bosworth Field, but the Yorkist cause had already suffered damage of its own making, thanks to sustained bouts of in-fighting between the siblings.

Clarence – the middle brother – was arguably the most disruptive and damaging of the three siblings. He was, in the words of historian Thomas Penn, a "simmering stew of self-entitlement and personal inadequacy". Add to the pot generous portions of jealousy, distrust, delusion and paranoia, and watch it come to the boil.

Clarence had, during his adolescence, keenly supported Edward's position as king. But when a rift developed between Edward and his closest advisor Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick – aka the 'Kingmaker' – Clarence dispensed with blood ties. He was, after all, by now Warwick's son-in-law, having married Warwick's eldest daughter, Isabel Neville – an arrangement that didn't meet with Edward's approval. The king was right to be suspicious. In March 1470, Clarence and Warwick secretly supported the Lincolnshire Rebellion, an uprising against Edward to put the next-in-line, Clarence, on the throne.

DID YOU KNOW?

FATAL ACCUSATION

Isabel, wife of George, Duke of Clarence, died soon after giving birth to the couple's final child. Claiming she had been poisoned, George had her lady-in-waiting – Ankarette Twynho – hanged. Twynho would later receive a posthumous pardon from Edward IV.

CHANGING ALLEGIANCES

After their involvement was uncovered, the pair fled to France where they formed an alliance with Margaret of Anjou, wife of the deposed Lancastrian king Henry VI. They simply swapped sides. In October 1470, Henry was released from the Tower of London and restored to the throne by Warwick and Clarence. But the latter grew mistrustful of his father-in-law when another daughter, Anne Neville, was married off to Henry's son and heir, Edward of Westminster. Warwick appeared to be hedging his bets, prompting Clarence to secretly reconcile with his older brother. When Edward IV returned to the throne the following year, Clarence was appointed Great Chamberlain of England.

Clarence also appeared to be addicted to friction when it came to his relationship with his younger brother, Richard. Richard was notably more loyal to Edward and had played a key role in the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, the crucial confrontations that had paved the way for the oldest York brother to regain the crown. As a result, Richard was rewarded with positions of power and influence in the north of England. After Edward of Westminster's death at Tewkesbury, Richard had married his widow, Anne Neville. The union brought him into sharp conflict with Clarence. At stake were rival claims to the not-insubstantial estates of Warwick – who had met his own end at Barnet in 1471 – which were held by the brothers' wives, the two Neville sisters. Attempting a wholesale land grab, Clarence continually cast doubts on the legitimacy of Richard and Anne's marriage.

A THIRST FOR POWER

Edward did his utmost to reconcile his two younger brothers, but further tensions surfaced following Isabel's death in 1476. Clarence planned to marry Mary of Burgundy, the only child of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and Isabella of Bourbon, but Edward blocked the marriage. Clarence, never the most psychologically stable of figures, sought another rebellion against his older brother. As a result, he was arrested, tried for treason and, when found guilty, executed. If Richard wasn't a direct instigator of the proceedings that led to Clarence's execution, he certainly didn't obstruct the process either, knowing that not only would he prosper financially from his brother's demise, but that it would also place him one step closer to the throne.

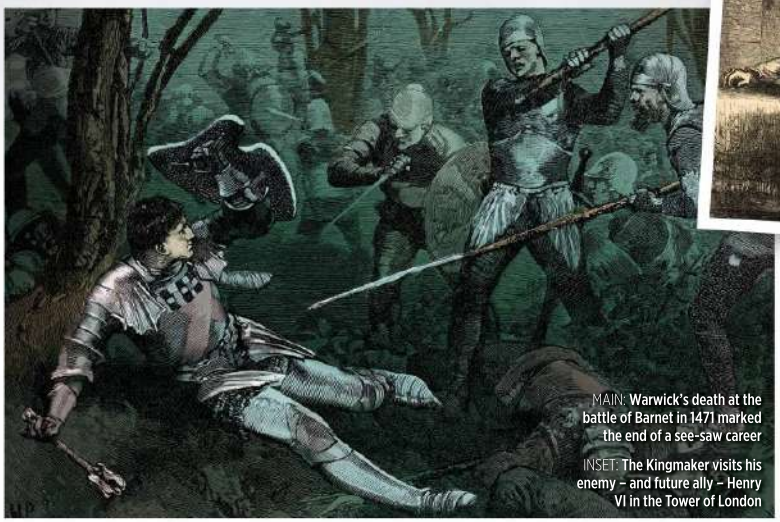
And – allegedly, at least – it wouldn't be the last time that Richard would take advantage of close family members to satisfy his cravings for enhanced power. Having literally fought Edward's corner throughout his rule, the king's sudden death in 1483 opened the door for the youngest York brother to make his move. All that stood before him were his two nephews, Edward's pre-teen sons. And they wouldn't be in the way for long.

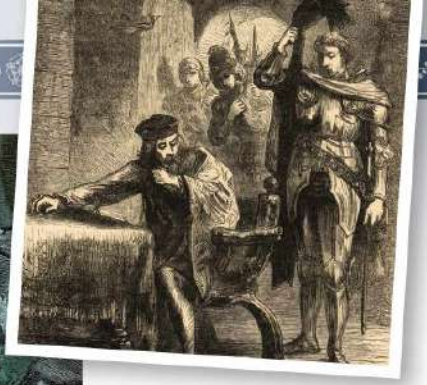
WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

INSET: **The Duke of Clarence was allegedly drowned in a butt of sweet wine after being convicted of treason against his brother**

MAIN: **A painting depicts the Yorkists' victory at the battle of Mortimer's Cross – apparently preceded by a vision of three suns**

"THE YORKIST CAUSE HAD SUFFERED DAMAGE OF ITS OWN MAKING, THANKS TO SUSTAINED BOUTS OF SIBLING IN-FIGHTING"





MAIN: Warwick's death at the battle of Barnet in 1471 marked the end of a see-saw career

INSET: The Kingmaker visits his enemy – and future ally – Henry VI in the Tower of London

WARWICK 'THE KINGMAKER'

An arbiter of English politics, Richard Neville's double-dealing ultimately led to his downfall

The personal ambition and diplomatic skills of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, would alter the course of the Wars of the Roses, but his thirst for power and shifting loyalties would see him pay the ultimate price.

Born in 1428, the eldest son of the Earl of Salisbury, it was a highly advantageous marriage as a young boy that started Neville on his rise to power. At around the age of six, he was betrothed to Anne Beauchamp, daughter of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and herself a young girl. The union would eventually bring Neville the earldom of Warwick and a huge fortune; by the early 1450s, he had become one of the most powerful nobles in England.

Young Warwick was initially in the service of Henry VI, until a land dispute with Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset – the king's favourite and a man of immense power and influence – saw him shift his allegiance to Richard, Duke of York, his uncle by marriage. Warwick fought alongside York – who would later seek to oust the king in favour of his own claim to the throne – at the first battle of St Albans, in 1455, distinguishing himself in the process. Henry VI was captured and the clash is widely seen as the start of the Wars of the Roses. As well as aiding York to victory, Warwick was also able to strike a blow to the two most prominent Lancastrian families, the Beauforts and the historic Neville rivals, the Percys.

As a reward for his bravery, Warwick was made captain of Calais. There, he established a powerbase of his own, controlled a large army, and formed strong diplomatic relationships with European powers. Warwick's star was in ascendance and he fought alongside the future Edward IV at the battle of Northampton in 1460, after which Richard, Duke of York was named heir to the throne.

POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

On 29 March 1461, the Yorkists won a decisive victory at the battle of Towton – one of the bloodiest clashes ever fought on British soil. The new Edward IV emerged victorious and Warwick was ensconced as the king's strongest ally and advisor.

Politically astute, Warwick exerted great influence over the new king, but their relationship became strained when, in 1464, Edward secretly married Elizabeth Woodville, the widow of a Lancastrian knight. Warwick, who had been negotiating a French royal marriage for Edward, was humiliated and furious. The clandestine marriage not only undermined his position at court, but weakened his influence with the king as the Woodvilles rose to prominence.

Seeking revenge, Warwick shifted his loyalties to Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, and, defying royal orders, proposed a marriage with his own daughter, Isabel – a union that took place in Calais in 1469 – promising to put Clarence on the throne. Warwick was now in open rebellion against Edward IV: that July, a royal army was defeated at the battle of Edgcote, and soon after, the king was seized and the queen's father and brother executed.

Lack of support for either Clarence or Warwick, though, forced the latter to release Edward and flee the country. Far from defeated, he allied with his former enemy, Margaret of Anjou – Henry VI's wife – and pledged allegiance to the house of Lancaster, solidifying the alliance by marrying his second daughter, Anne, to Margaret's son, Edward of Westminster. Warwick returned to England in 1470 with such an army that Edward had no choice but to flee. Warwick restored Henry VI and, once again, became the power behind the throne.

It was not to last. Edward's return in 1471 saw Warwick killed in battle as he tried desperately to defeat the army of the king he had created.

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

After rebelling against Edward IV in 1469, Warwick imprisoned the Yorkist king at his castle

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

PEACEMAKERS, PLOTTERS AND SURVIVORS

Men may have frequently ended up centre stage, but some of the major players in the Wars of the Roses were women

INSET: Elizabeth of York's 1486 marriage to Henry VII, which united the houses of York and Lancaster, was largely orchestrated by their mothers

MAIN: Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, c1445. The queen had to rule on her husband's behalf due to his periods of mental illness

The Wars of the Roses began and ended with two marriages that promised peace. The first, that of Margaret of Anjou to King Henry VI in 1445, signalled a truce between England and France, and an end to the bloody Hundred Years' War. The other – an alliance between the newly crowned Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, daughter of the Yorkist king Edward IV – ushered in a new, albeit precarious peace, and eventually, the birth of the Tudor dynasty.

It's such marriages, and the alliances they brought, that regularly characterise women's stories during the period, their actions relegated in favour of the men who battled for the crown. But this was a war between kin, rather than countries, and many noble women of the era held influence in these vying houses, and thus became major players. Rather than two-dimensional chattels, the women at the centre of these stories had fierce loyalties and were capable of great acts of both honour and betrayal, albeit mostly in the interests of their own relatives and allies.

Though sources for the lives of women in this period are inevitably fewer than those of the warring kings and male nobles, perhaps the most well-known is Margaret of Anjou who, thanks largely to the words of playwright William

GETTY IMAGES X2

DID YOU KNOW?

WOMEN'S FIGHTS

During the Hundred Years' War, Margaret of Anjou's grandmother, – Yolande of Aragon – backed the French and became a powerful supporter of Joan of Arc. According to legend, she even donned silver armour and led her own troops against the English.

"SOME HISTORIANS HAVE ARGUED THAT MARGARET WAS NOT SCHEMING, BUT PRAGMATIC"

◀ Shakespeare, lives on in popular imagination as the powerful 'she-wolf' of the Wars of the Roses. A queen consort since the age of 15, she became more politically active after Henry VI suffered a mental breakdown; when the Yorkist faction challenged her husband's throne she rallied Lancastrian forces and appealed for international aid, personally crisscrossing the Channel as part of a Europe-wide plot against the Yorkists.

She forged canny alliances, wedding her son, Edward, to Anne Neville – the daughter of 'Kingmaker' Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick.

However, while one line in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy praises Margaret's "valiant courage and undaunted spirit", she is also painted by the playwright as vindictive and power-hungry, "a foul wrinkled witch" who gleefully places a paper crown on the decapitated head of Richard, Duke of York following his defeat at the battle of Wakefield. (An entirely fabricated story, although York's severed head was dispatched to his namesake city as a grim warning.)

Despite this persevering reputation, some historians have argued that Margaret was not scheming, but pragmatic; she had been raised by her mother, Isabella, and grandmother, Yolande of Aragon – both powerful women who had ruled over the French duchy of Anjou. Margaret may have believed she had no choice but to take the reins of power when it became clear Henry could no longer hold them. This act – whether taken through ambition or practicality – can also be seen as a catalyst of the conflict that followed; Margaret's strength and competence highlighted the lack of those qualities in her husband, and indirectly built a case for his removal.

LEFT: **A painting depicts Margaret of Anjou (*centre*) being taken prisoner following the battle of Tewkesbury**

TOP RIGHT: **Margaret is shown planting a paper crown on the severed head of Richard, Duke of York, following his brutal death at Wakefield**

BOTTOM RIGHT: **Cecily Neville, Richard's widow, would prove hugely influential during the reign of her son, Edward IV**

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

While Margaret tried, and ultimately failed, to hold onto power through her son, who was killed in battle – another mother was elevated to new heights by her children. Cecily Neville was the wife of Richard, Duke of York, who had been placed as protector of the realm during Henry VI's first period of mental illness. Known as the 'Rose of Raby', she had enjoyed noble status as part of the royal household, and in the 1440s had accompanied her husband to France and Ireland.

In one rare glimpse of noble women's lives, Cecily is said to have spent £608 in 1443–44 on clothes, which included a dress of crimson velvet, lined with ermine, and decorated with 325 pearls and 8 ½ oz of gold. Dresses such as this were likely no mere extravagance, though. Keeping up an appearance of riches and power was important, and showing off a family's wealth was just one way that women like Cecily could contribute to this game of thrones.

After Richard, Duke of York's death

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1

at Wakefield in 1460, the Yorkist claim passed to Cecily's son Edward, Earl of March. Cecily's influence was apparent; when the tide turned in her son's favour and he was crowned Edward IV in London, one noble urged another to seek favour with the new queen mother, "who can rule the king as she pleases". Cecily was even given the privilege of the queen's quarters, and repeatedly appeared beside her son on state occasions.

This influence was to change when Edward IV married. A widow with two sons by her first marriage and five years older than Edward, Elizabeth Woodville was an unusual choice of royal wife. Kings were expected to marry to cement a foreign alliance. They were also supposed to marry fellow royalty, but Elizabeth was the daughter of a mere knight (though her mother, Jacquetta, was descended from the royal house of Luxembourg), and she would be the first English queen since the Norman Conquest. Edward and Elizabeth's marriage, conducted in secret, is viewed by some historians as a match based on love, while others regard it as a decision driven by the king's lust to bed a 'virtuous widow'.

Either way, according to contemporaries Elizabeth was beautiful, gracious and had Edward's trust; when he left to invade France in 1475, he referred to her in his will as: "Our said dearest wife in whom we have most singularly put our trust." She bore 10 children by the king (including the two boys who would become known to history as the Princes in the Tower).

Whatever the motive for the union, it marked another turning point in the wars. Other nobles – most notably Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick – were angered by Elizabeth's elevation, along with that of the Woodville family, and rose in rebellion.

TACTICAL UNIONS

Some historians have credited the love-match of Elizabeth and Edward with laying a blueprint for future monarchs to prioritise happiness alongside political advantages, such as that of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, which is largely regarded as a successful, loving marriage, though one that of course had significant political leverage. But while some women of the era seemingly had some amount of autonomy, for many other noble women it was different.

Taken prisoner after the battle of Tewkesbury, in May 1471, the now-widowed Anne Neville fell back into Yorkist hands and was subject to the decisions of the men around her. Some accounts have her disguised as a kitchen boy by – the also widowed – George, Duke of Clarence, to hide her while he debated marrying her. However, she ultimately married his younger brother, the future Richard III. Though it's not known whether Anne had a say in her fate, hers is an example of the power lent by women's lineage, willingly or not – the daughter of the 'Kingmaker' was so important that she was honoured by Richard III with a joint coronation in 1483.

WORDS: ELINOR EVANS

RED QUEEN V WHITE QUEEN?

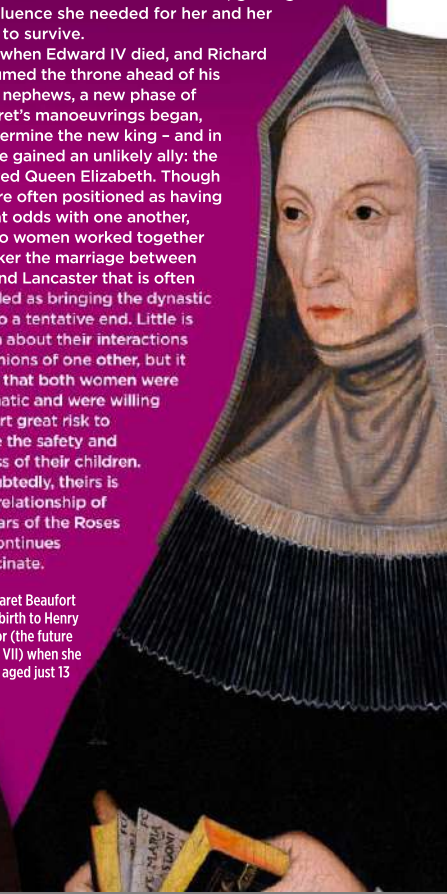
Margaret Beaufort and Elizabeth Woodville put their differences aside to forge a new royal dynasty – and help bring about peace

A woman who was arguably most successful in taking charge of her own destiny was Margaret Beaufort, a vital cog in the machine of Lancastrian succession. A descendant of John of Gaunt, it was through Margaret that the bloodline survived, though (perhaps learning from the response to Margaret of Anjou's rise) she relinquished her claim in favour of her son, Henry Tudor, to whom she had given birth at the age of just 13. But as the Yorkist cause prevailed and Henry went into exile in Brittany, Margaret – ever a skilled politician – brokered a new marriage match for herself (unlike Anne Neville, there is evidence that Margaret was instrumental in setting up her own advantageous matches). She deliberately placed herself at the heart of the new royal court, where she would have become more familiar with the queen, Elizabeth Woodville. Though Margaret is often accused of wiliness and 'playing both sides', like many women of the time, her loyalties were not altogether binary; she would have potentially served as a symbol of a York/Lancastrian truce in the court, gaining the influence she needed for her and her family to survive.

Yet, when Edward IV died, and Richard III assumed the throne ahead of his young nephews, a new phase of Margaret's manoeuvrings began, to undermine the new king – and in this she gained an unlikely ally: the widowed Queen Elizabeth. Though they are often positioned as having been at odds with one another, the two women worked together to broker the marriage between York and Lancaster that is often regarded as bringing the dynastic wars to a tentative end. Little is known about their interactions or opinions of one other, but it shows that both women were pragmatic and were willing to court great risk to ensure the safety and success of their children. Undoubtedly, theirs is a key relationship of the Wars of the Roses that continues to fascinate.

ABOVE: **A drawing imagines Edward IV meeting his wife, Elizabeth Woodville. A widow with two sons, she was deemed an unusual choice of bride**

RIGHT: **Elizabeth bore Edward 10 children, including the Princes in the Tower**



Margaret Beaufort gave birth to Henry Tudor (the future Henry VII) when she was aged just 13

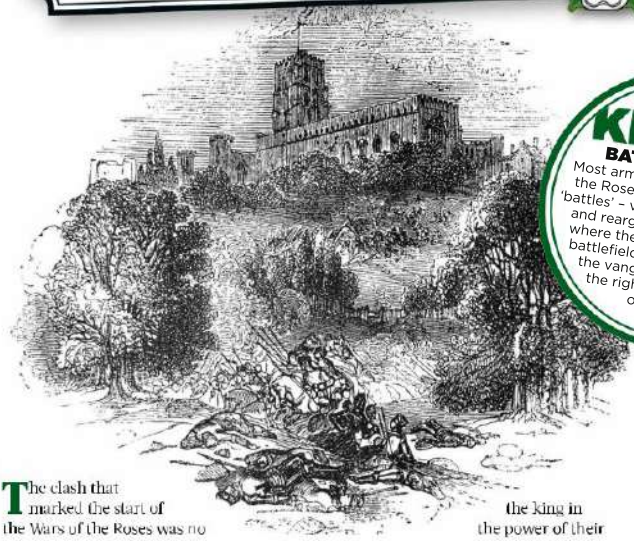
THE BATTLES THAT SHAPED THE WARS OF THE ROSES

Despite rumbling on for at least three decades, the conflict saw fewer than 15 months of actual fighting. However, the clashes that did occur were by no means insignificant – or lacking in brutality

PLEASE NOTE THAT BATTLE FIGURES VARY A GREAT DEAL DEPENDING ON THEIR SOURCE

ST ALBANS (FIRST), 22 MAY 1455

- Yorkist victory
- 2,000 Lancastrians v 7,000 Yorkists
- Negligible casualties



DID YOU KNOW?

BATTLE TACTICS

Most armies during the Wars of the Roses were split into three 'battles' – vanguard, middle guard and rearguard. These denoted where they would fight on the battlefield: if drawn up in line, the vanguard would be on the right, the rearguard on the left.

LEFT: **The first battle of St Albans, fought in the shadow of the town's abbey church, lasted a mere half an hour**

RIGHT: **The skirmish would help shape the reputation of the Earl of Warwick, who would go on to be dubbed the 'Kingmaker'**

The clash that marked the start of the Wars of the Roses was no pitched battle, but a skirmish through the narrow streets of St Albans, the result of years of simmering rivalry between the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions in the English nobility, and five months after Henry VI's first episode of mental illness.

In April 1455, a recently recovered Henry called for a great council at Leicester. Richard, Duke of York and his allies the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick were summoned, but with the king in the power of their enemies, the Yorkist lords suspected this council would be used to brand them as traitors.

The Yorkists marched to intercept the royal retinue, reaching St Albans early on 22 May. By the time the Lancastrians arrived shortly before 10am, York and his host had already established a camp east of the city. Attempts by Henry at a peaceful resolution unsurprisingly got nowhere – York's principal demand was the punishment of the Duke of Somerset, who was a favourite of Henry VI and his queen, Margaret of Anjou. It was never going to happen.

The Yorkists abandoned diplomacy first, with York and Salisbury launching assaults up the narrow lanes, both of which were repulsed with heavy losses. Warwick – showing the first glimmers of the prowess that would see him rise to power – had a different idea: he led his men into town through the gardens and backs of houses, bursting upon the royal defenders in the marketplace. His archers shot down the men surrounding the king and even Henry himself was injured, suffering an arrow wound to his neck or shoulder.

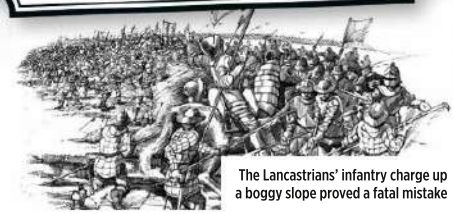
Somerset, who it is alleged was told by a soothsayer to beware of castles as one would herald his demise, was cut down outside a tavern called the Castle Inn.

It was all over in 30 minutes. Though a minor engagement, the clash was politically seismic: with his great rival dead, York would resume his position as chief advisor to a weak king.

ALAMY X4, GETTY IMAGES X3

BLORE HEATH, 23 SEPTEMBER 1459

- Yorkist victory
- 10,000 Lancastrians v 5,000 Yorkists
- Casualties: 2,000 Lancastrians & 1,000 Yorkists

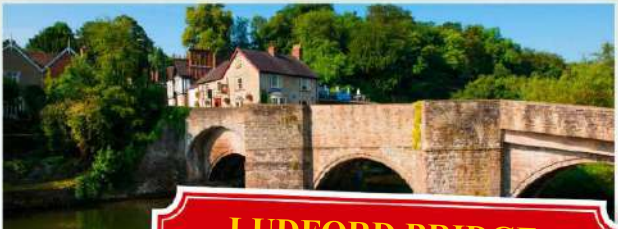


The Lancastrians' infantry charge up a boggy slope proved a fatal mistake

An uneasy peace lingered in the years after St Albans – during which Henry VI probably suffered another mental collapse (and recovered) and Richard, Duke of York was briefly appointed lord protector – but by the summer of 1459 both factions were actively recruiting armies.

Blore Heath in Staffordshire was where hostilities began anew, when forces under the Earl of Salisbury were accosted by a Lancastrian army twice as large as they attempted to link up with York and Warwick. Outnumbered two to one, Salisbury arrayed his men atop a bank – placing a brook between himself and the Lancastrians – then made a feint as if to retreat. Lord Audley took the bait, launching two cavalry charges that were forced back by Yorkist archers on the high ground, claiming perhaps as many as 2,000 lives, including Audley himself.

Next, the Lancastrians attacked on foot, and this time the Yorkists fell upon the men struggling up the boggy slope with swords and axes. The pitched battle lasted four hours; the rout, through the night.



The Shropshire bridge which gave the 'battle' its name

LUDFORD BRIDGE, 12 OCTOBER 1459

- Lancastrian victory
- 30–60,000 Lancastrians v 20–25,000 Yorkists*

*according to contemporary reports, which incline towards exaggeration

Though two armies met at Ludford Bridge, no actual fighting took place – mainly because York, Salisbury and Warwick all stole away on the eve of battle.

The problem was Henry VI. Taking up arms against the king's 'evil' counsellors was one thing, but taking up arms against his anointed person was quite another; the sight of Henry on horseback and in full armour was enough to sow doubt in even the stoutest heart. It was a doubt that the Lancastrians stoked further by offering to pardon anyone fighting for York.

The Yorkist position grew weaker still with the defection of Andrew Trollope and the 600 men under his command. Trollope was an experienced soldier, and his men were among the strongest fighters in the Yorkist army; worse, he was a confidant of Warwick, and knew their battle plans. And they were not the only men to switch sides or melt away.

On the night of 12 October, realising that giving battle would be pointless, the three magnates and a few close allies fled under the pretence of journeying to Ludlow to 'refresh themselves', leaving their army to wake up leaderless the next morning. Henry pardoned the army – he had no quarrel with them.

NORTHAMPTON, 10 JULY 1460

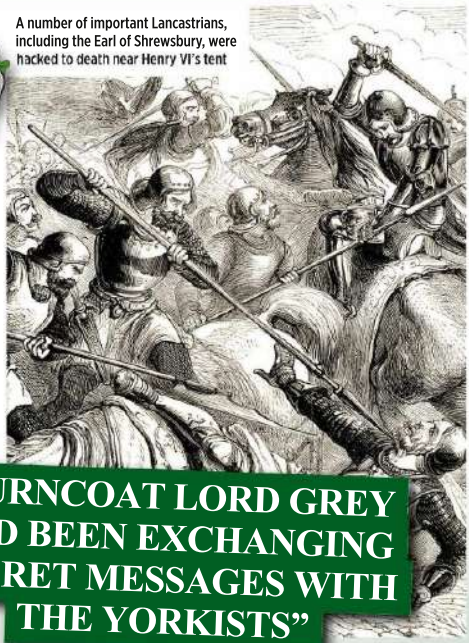
- Yorkist victory
- 5,000 Lancastrians v much larger Yorkist army
- 300 Lancastrians killed

Warwick and Edward, Earl of March – York's eldest son – went into exile in Calais after the debacle at Ludford Bridge, but by summer 1460 they were back in England. This time they would capture the king, and they did it with the help of some battlefield treachery.

It had already been raining for two hours when the Yorkists began their advance on the Lancastrians, who established a camp in the vicinity of an abbey. It wasn't a promising start: forcing their way through the mud as arrows fell upon them, the Lancastrians repelled the Yorkist 'battles' [divisions] commanded by Warwick and Lord Fauconberg, and perhaps the whole assault would have faltered had it not been for Lancastrian turncoat Lord Grey of Ruthin.

Grey had been exchanging secret messages with the Yorkists. When the third battle, led by the Earl of March, reached the defences manned by Grey, the Lancastrians stepped forward and helped the Yorkists through the pointed stakes and treacherous ditches, giving them access to the king's camp. This was no act of ideology: in a potent reminder that many chose sides based on family feuds or material gain, Grey's price was that the Yorkists back him in a property dispute with a cousin. He would later be made Earl of Kent.

Lancastrian resistance evaporated, and several prominent men were slain trying to prevent the Yorkists from reaching Henry VI's tent. Two months later, with Henry in custody once more, the Duke of York felt safe enough to return from his own exile in Ireland, after which he attempted to claim the throne. It was a step too far for his allies, but it did lead to Parliament passing the Act of Accord, which disinherited Henry and Margaret's son Edward of Westminster in favour of York.

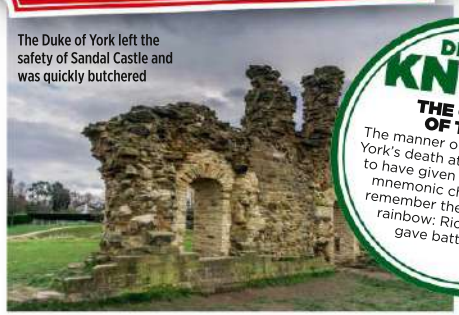


A number of important Lancastrians, including the Earl of Shrewsbury, were hacked to death near Henry VI's tent

"TURNCOAT LORD GREY HAD BEEN EXCHANGING SECRET MESSAGES WITH THE YORKISTS"

WAKEFIELD, 30 DECEMBER 1460

- Lancastrian victory
- 18,000 Lancastrians v 9,000 Yorkists
- Casualties: 200 Lancastrians & 700–2,500 Yorkists



The Duke of York left the safety of Sandal Castle and was quickly butchered

DID YOU KNOW?

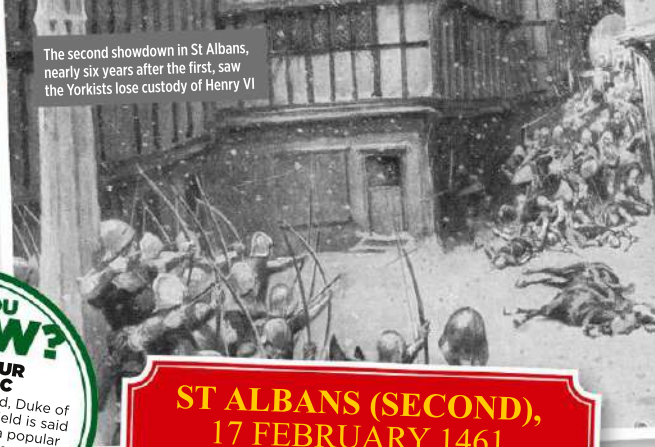
THE COLOUR OF TRAGIC

The manner of Richard, Duke of York's death at Wakefield is said to have given rise to a popular mnemonic children learn to remember the colours of the rainbow: Richard of York gave battle in vain.

Unwilling to accept her son being disinherited, Margaret of Anjou raised another army that besieged York at Sandal Castle near Wakefield. For reasons that aren't entirely clear, instead of waiting for reinforcements he sallied out to give battle against a force at least double his own.

That he attacked at all caught the Lancastrians by surprise, but his men were soon surrounded and butchered. York was among the slain – his severed head, so the legend goes, tauntingly garnished with a paper crown.

He wasn't the only notable Yorkist to die: his second son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland was cut down trying to flee, while his long-time ally Salisbury was captured during the night and taken to Pontefract Castle – he was subsequently dragged out and murdered by the townsfolk.



The second showdown in St Albans, nearly six years after the first, saw the Yorkists lose custody of Henry VI

ST ALBANS (SECOND), 17 FEBRUARY 1461

- Lancastrian victory
- 14,000 Lancastrians v 10,000 Yorkists
- Casualties: 2,000–4,000 total*

*according to contemporary sources

Warwick knew Margaret of Anjou would need to march on London, so he rode to intercept her army at St Albans. Believing she would have to arrive from the north, he spread out his three battles on those outskirts of the town, fortifying the market square with longbowmen and Burgundian gunners. Unfortunately for him, the Lancastrians arrived from the west.

The men billeted in St Albans held up the Lancastrians for several hours, but they were ultimately overcome, allowing an assault on the Yorkists' unprepared rearguard. It's unclear whether Warwick simply didn't realise what was happening behind him until it was too late, or had trouble coercing his captains to march back to reinforce them, but by the time he was able to take action the rearguard was in flight. He made a tactical withdrawal as darkness fell, and in doing so was forced to abandon the prize prisoner that he had brought along with him for safekeeping – Henry VI.

TOWTON, 29 MARCH 1461

- Yorkist victory
- c40,000 Lancastrians v c40,000 Yorkists
- c28,000 killed, casualties unknown

Edward, Earl of March was proclaimed Edward IV following the second battle of St Albans, the Yorkists now asserting that Henry IV and the entire house of Lancaster had been usurpers and the throne was being rightfully restored. Yet it was a hollow crown while Henry VI was still at large.

Their inevitable showdown came on Palm Sunday, in a nightmare of blood and snow. It began with an archery duel, in which the Lancastrians, firing into a headwind and almost-zero visibility, didn't realise their arrows were falling short. Once they had run out, the Yorkists dashed forward, collected the unbroken shafts, and peppered the Lancastrians with their own missiles. The melee that followed was hours of graceless work, a frenzied press of stabs and shoves – which carried on for so long that men would leave the battle to take breaks. Unlike Henry VI, who been dispatched to the city of York for his own safety, Edward IV was in the thick of the fighting.

The battle only turned with the arrival of 4,000 fresh Yorkist reinforcements under the Duke of Norfolk, who piled into the Lancastrian left. First the line buckled; then it collapsed entirely. The rout is where the real killing took place, and why part of the battlefield is today known as the Bloody Meadow, while the River Cock – which had anchored the Lancastrian flank at the start of the battle – became a lethal obstacle in which scores of men drowned. By dusk, it was running red. Henry fled to Scotland, taking Margaret and his son with him; Lancastrian power was broken.

Towton is often described as being one of the bloodiest battles fought on English soil. While the frequently quoted figure of c28,000 men killed is likely to be an exaggeration, it was unusually bloody.

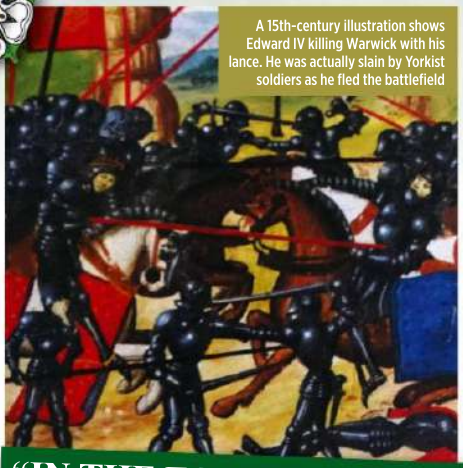
ABOVE: **The tranquillity of 'Bloody Meadow' belies the carnage it once witnessed**

TOP: **A 19th-century illustration shows Lord Fauconberg, a prominent Yorkist, ordering his archers to use the high wind speed to inflict damage on the enemy**

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X4, BRIDGEMAN X1

BARNET, 14 APRIL 1471

- Yorkist victory
- 15,000 Lancastrians v 10,000 Yorkists
- Casualties: 1,000 Lancastrians & 500 Yorkists



A 15th-century illustration shows Edward IV killing Warwick with his lance. He was actually slain by Yorkist soldiers as he fled the battlefield

Edward IV and Warwick fell out in the mid-1460s largely due to Edward's choice of wife: in 1464, while Warwick was away negotiating a match with a French princess, Edward secretly wed Elizabeth Woodville. Their union was a cause célèbre – she was only from the gentry, and her newly elevated family rapidly became a thorn in Warwick's side.

Two failed rebellions in 1469 saw Warwick flee to France; he returned in 1470, this time at the head of an army that declared itself for the Lancastrians. Now it was Edward's turn to flee. Warwick reinstated Henry VI as a puppet king, with himself as England's effective ruler, but it was only a few months before Edward reappeared with an army of his own.

The erstwhile allies clashed at Barnet on Easter Sunday 1471, and once again the foul weather would have huge ramifications. According to one contemporary account, there was "so exceeding a mist that neither host could plainly see the other", and in this haze neither Warwick nor Edward realised their armies were not directly facing. When the Yorkist right wing advanced, they found no Lancastrians ahead of them, so they swung around and crashed into Warwick's flank. At the other end of the line the situation was reversed, though the outcome more palpable: the Lancastrian right wing turned into Yorkist left, which promptly broke and was pursued by the Earl of Oxford's Lancastrians all the way into Barnet.

Oxford gradually gained control of his men and brought them back to the battlefield, where they met not Yorkists, but the rear of the Lancastrian centre under Warwick's brother, the Marquess of Montague. In the foggy gloom, they mistook each other for the enemy and traded arrows. Cries of "Treason!" echoed when Montague's men finally recognised Oxford's, and their morale withered. Soon the entire Lancastrian army was in flight, with Warwick cut down as he tried to dash away on his horse.

"IN THE FOGGY GLOOM, THEY MISTOOK EACH OTHER FOR THE ENEMY AND TRADED ARROWS"

TEWKESBURY, 4 MAY 1471

- Yorkist victory
- 6,000 Lancastrians v 3,500 Yorkists
- Casualties: 2,000 Lancastrians, Yorkists unknown

ABOVE: **Costumed actors recreate the battle of Tewkesbury – the last serious challenge to Edward IV's reign**

RIGHT: **A Yorkist fends off an attack. Despite being vastly outnumbered, Edward's men emerged victorious**

On the day Warwick was killed at Barnet, Margaret of Anjou and her son, Edward of Westminster, returned from exile. Though disconsolate at Warwick's demise, she wasted little time in raising a new Lancastrian army for another showdown, fought at Tewkesbury three weeks later.

Edward struck first, unleashing what one anonymous contemporary chronicler described as a "right-a-sharp shower" – an iron hail spewed by archers, handgunners and cannon pilfered at Barnet. The Duke of Somerset responded by leading his battle, on the Lancastrian right, not straight at the Yorkists but through a maze of hedges and lanes to flank their position. Edward had anticipated this, sequestering some 200 cavalry in nearby woodlands, and as the Yorkist left engaged Somerset they came thundering into the fray. Beset from two sides, and still without support from the rest of the Lancastrian host, Somerset's men were gradually cut to pieces.

When Somerset made it back to the Lancastrian line and found the centre battle standing idle, he flew into a fury, branding its commander Lord Wenlock a traitor and caving in his skull with an axe. The Yorkists came in hot pursuit, the Lancastrians broke, and the killing began in earnest.

This would be the last serious challenge to Edward IV's reign. Around 2,000 Lancastrians perished, among them Edward of Westminster. Henry VI was placed in the Tower of London, and died in mysterious circumstances shortly after, while Margaret of Anjou – captured a few days later – would eventually be ransomed to live out the rest of her days in France. Somerset attempted to seek refuge in nearby Tewkesbury Abbey, but was dragged out and summarily executed two days later. The house of York appeared to be unassailable.

WORDS: KEV LOCHUN

RICHARD III'S LAST STAND

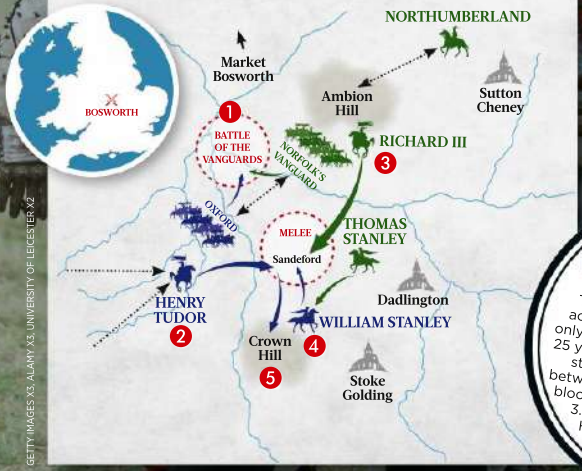
Along with Hastings, Culloden and Waterloo – to name a few – the battle of Bosworth ranks as one of the most famous clashes in British history. Fought on 22 August 1485, it heralded the fall of Richard III, the end of the Plantagenet dynasty and the birth of the Tudor age

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

BOSWORTH FACTS

- **Date:** 22 August 1485
- **Richard III's army:** c10,000–15,000 troops
- **Henry Tudor's army:** 5,000 troops, including some 2,000 French mercenaries
- **Lord Thomas Stanley and Sir William Stanley:** c6,000 men between them
- **Terrain:** Open field, meadow and lowland moor/marsh
- **Losses:** Henry Tudor: c100 Richard III: c1,000

1: The opening exchanges take place between Yorkist John Howard, Duke of Norfolk and John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, for Henry Tudor. Hand-to-hand fighting lasts about an hour. 2: Henry Tudor and a small force become detached from the main body of his army, leaving him vulnerable and exposed. 3: Richard III skirts the main battle and leads his household cavalry on a charge towards Henry Tudor 4: William Stanley orders his forces to intervene, overwhelming Richard III's knights and attacking them from behind. Richard is killed. 5: According to legend, one of the Stanley brothers, on finding Richard's fallen crown, takes it to Henry and crowns him.



GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X3, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER X2

THE THIRD ARMY AT BOSWORTH

Richard III boasted the larger army at Bosworth Field, outnumbering Henry Tudor's by as many as three to one, but it was the intervention of brothers William and Thomas Stanley, two former stalwarts of the house of York, and their force of c6,000 men that decided the battle's outcome.

As Henry Tudor, who had recently landed in Wales, marched north to seize the throne, recruiting men as he went, Richard, too, set out to muster as much military support as he could. Lord Thomas Stanley, one of the most powerful magnates in England, had manoeuvred his family between Lancaster and York throughout the Wars of the Roses, swearing loyalty to Yorkist king Edward IV in 1461; marrying Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of the Lancastrian heir, Henry Tudor, in 1472; and then playing a key role in Richard III's coronation in 1483.

In dire need of military support, Richard ordered the brothers to bring their armies to fight for him in the battle to come, but on learning that Thomas had already promised his support to his stepson Henry Tudor, the Yorkist king took the nobleman's eldest son, George, hostage, hoping the move would 'persuade' the Stanleys to join him.

When they arrived at the battlefield, the Stanley brothers joined neither army, and instead hedged their bets, watching the battle play out. Knowing he could not win without their help, Richard sent a message to Thomas informing him that if he did not bring his forces to the king's aid, his son would be executed. The reply was short and to the point: "Sire, I have other sons". As Richard and his cavalry thundered towards Henry, William Stanley intervened, sending in his troops, who surrounded and cut down the Yorkist king.

Battle reenactors from the Wars of the Roses Federation recreate the famous clash

DID YOU KNOW?

LOST AND FOUND

The battle of Bosworth wasn't actually fought at Bosworth and only became known as such around 25 years after it took place. A major study by the Battlefields Trust between 2005 and 2009 traced the bloody clash to a location around 3.2km southwest of Ambion Hill, the traditional site of the battlefield.

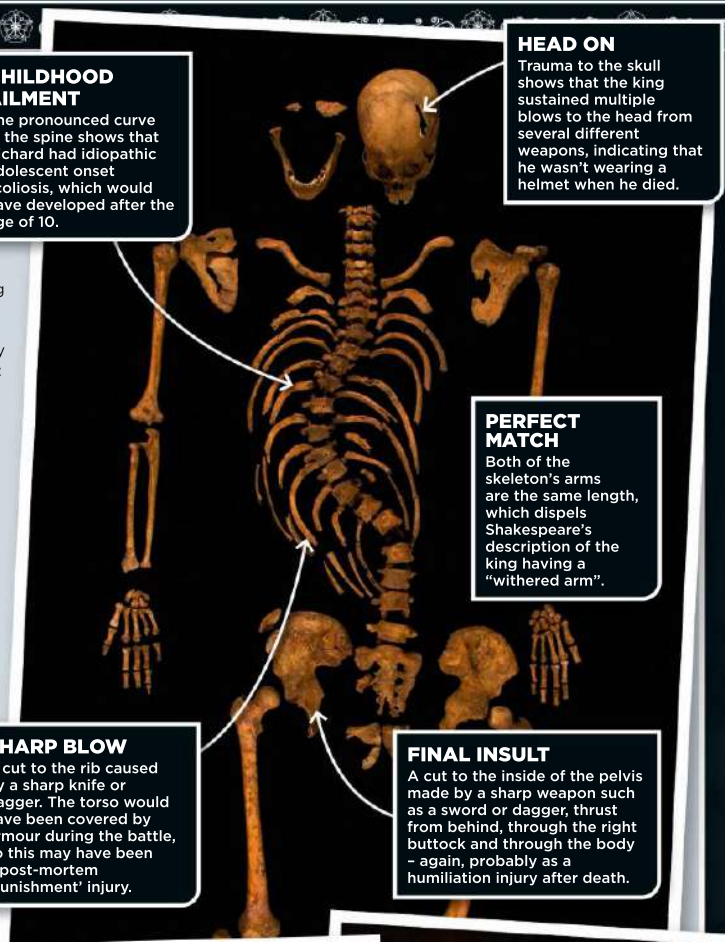
RICHARD'S DEATH

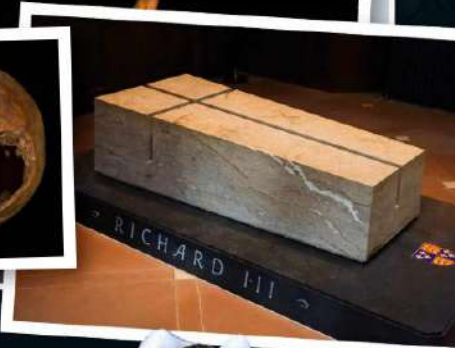
After leading a mounted cavalry charge against Henry Tudor in a bid to kill his rival and end the conflict – slaying the would-be king's standard bearer with his own hands as he strove to reach his foe – Richard III was himself cut down in the thick of battle, earning the dubious title of the last English king to be killed in combat.

Various accounts recorded Richard's bloody demise. According to the *Crowland Chronicle*: "King Richard's body was found among the other slain. Many other insults were heaped on it, and not very humanely, a halter was thrown round the neck, and it was carried to Leicester." Another contemporary account described Richard as being "suddenly cut down like a wretch in the thick of his army by a comparatively small force of armed men... though small in body and feeble of limb, he bore himself like a gallant knight."

Richard's body was brought back to Leicester and placed on public display to prove that he was truly dead, before being buried in the choir of the Grey Friars church. The friary was demolished in 1538 and over time, all evidence of the building, and Richard's grave, were lost, with many believing that the king's skeleton had been dug up and thrown into the River Soar.

In 2012, however, a project to find Richard's grave, organised by Philippa Langley of the Richard III Society and conducted by a team of researchers and archaeologists from the University of Leicester, saw the discovery of a skeleton beneath a car park built on the site of the friary. In February 2013, radiocarbon dating, radiological evidence, DNA and bone analysis, and archaeological results confirmed that the skeleton was indeed that of Richard III. In March 2015, he was finally laid to rest at Leicester Cathedral.


CHILDHOOD AILMENT
The pronounced curve in the spine shows that Richard had idiopathic adolescent onset scoliosis, which would have developed after the age of 10.
HEAD ON
Trauma to the skull shows that the king sustained multiple blows to the head from several different weapons, indicating that he wasn't wearing a helmet when he died.
PERFECT MATCH
Both of the skeleton's arms are the same length, which dispels Shakespeare's description of the king having a "withered arm".
SHARP BLOW
A cut to the rib caused by a sharp knife or dagger. The torso would have been covered by armour during the battle, so this may have been a post-mortem 'punishment' injury.
FINAL INSULT
A cut to the inside of the pelvis made by a sharp weapon such as a sword or dagger, thrust from behind, through the right buttock and through the body – again, probably as a humiliation injury after death.



RIGHT: **Analysis of Richard III's skull showed evidence of nine separate wounds – two of which were potentially fatal**

FAR RIGHT: **The king's remains were interred inside a simple stone tomb in Leicester Cathedral in 2015**

BIG NUMBERS

7

The number of 'crimes' attributed to Richard III in Shakespeare's play of the same name, including multiple murders, tyranny and usurpation of the throne

2

The battle is believed to have lasted around two hours and was probably over by midday

25 MONTHS

Richard III ruled for just 25 months – one of the shortest reigns in British history

23 YEARS

Henry Tudor reigned for 23 years and five months.

140

The number of cannon on the battlefield, according to one account of the clash. Given the number of cannonballs found, though, the actual number was probably closer to 30

5 GREATEST MYSTERIES

BEHIND THE WARS OF THE ROSES

Dan Jones delves into the unanswered questions about a tumultuous, scandalous period of English history

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH KING HENRY VI?

Henry VI was comfortably the most incompetent king of the whole Plantagenet line, and his benign but ultimately disastrous rule began the Wars of the Roses.

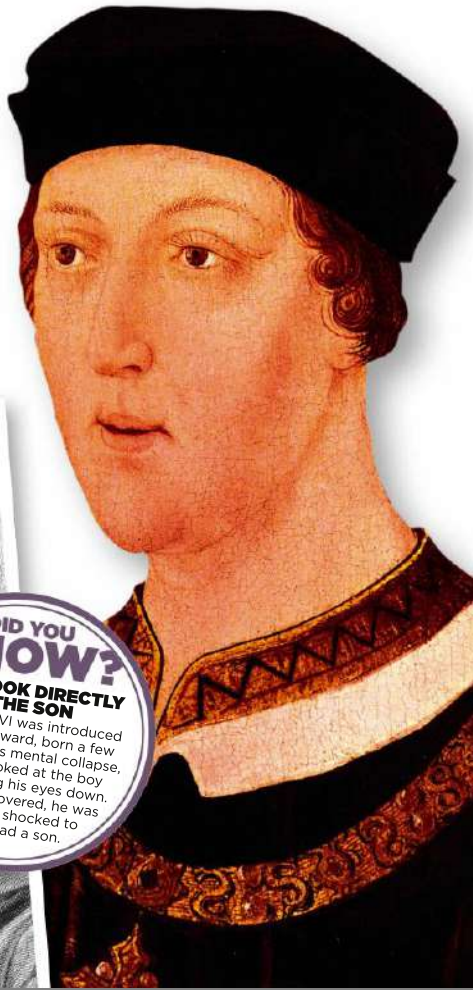
The crisis broke in 1453 when the 31-year-old Henry appears to have suffered a near-complete mental collapse. For a period of 18 months, he stopped responding to other people; struggled to recognise his own wife or newborn son, Edward; and went through lengthy spells when he was completely helpless and utterly withdrawn from the world. One contemporary described the king as "smitten with a frenzy and his wit and reason withdrawn".

The obvious comparison was with Henry's grandfather, Charles VI of France, who had suffered similarly long bouts of mental illness in which he attacked his courtiers, smeared himself in his own waste and screamed that he felt thousands of sharp needles piercing his flesh.

Could this mean that Henry's illness was hereditary? And how would we diagnose it today? Catatonia? Schizophrenia? Severe depression? Medical diagnoses across the centuries are fraught with difficulties, and it is quite possible that we will never be able to say for sure. What we do know is that Henry's illness had a correspondingly dreadful effect on both the man and his kingdom, as his subjects fought at first to save the realm, and then to steal control of it for themselves.

RIGHT: **Henry VI is the only English monarch to have been crowned king of France, but his reign saw nearly all English territory lost in that country**

BELOW: **A 19th-century engraving of Charles VI of France, Henry's grandfather – he believed he was made of glass**

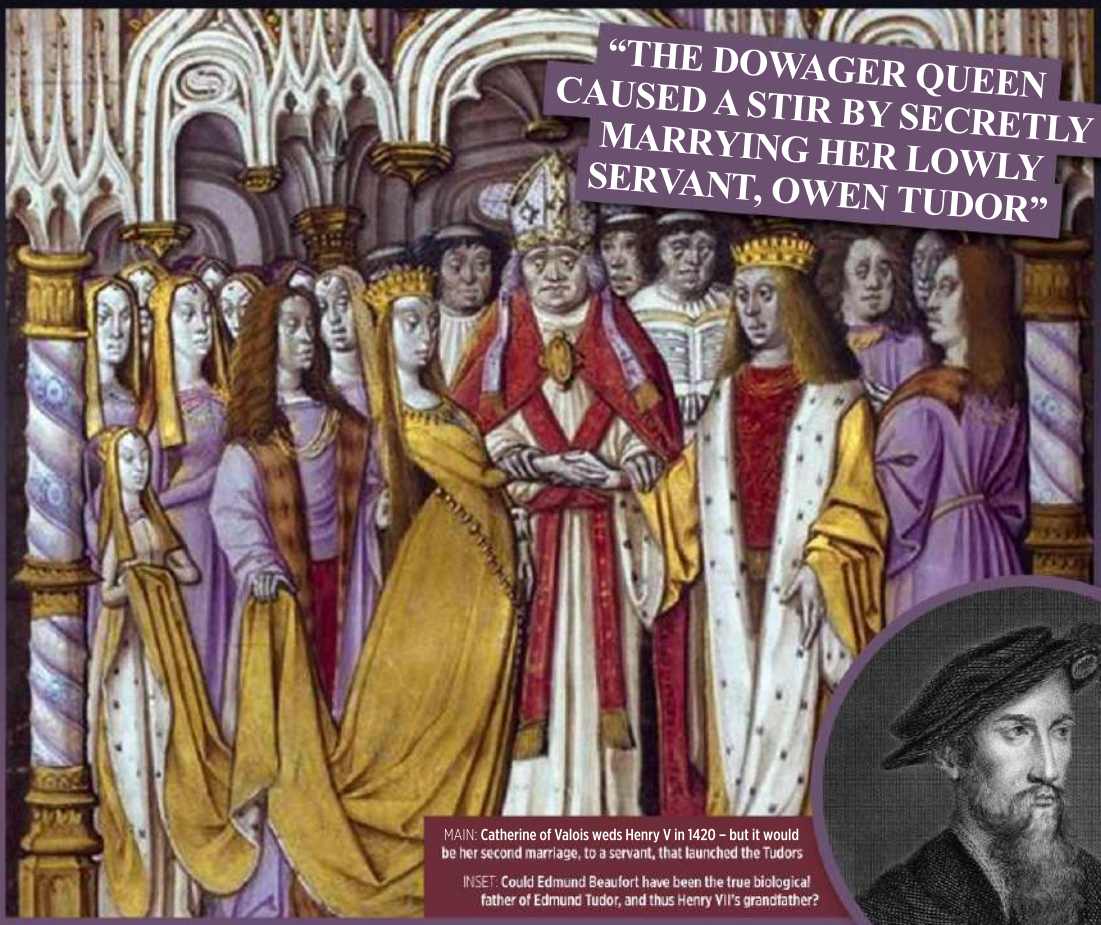


DID YOU KNOW?

DON'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SON

When Henry VI was introduced to his son Edward, born a few months into his mental collapse, he barely looked at the boy before casting his eyes down. When he recovered, he was reportedly shocked to find he had a son.

ALAMY X3



"THE DOWAGER QUEEN CAUSED A STIR BY SECRETLY MARRYING HER LOWLY SERVANT, OWEN TUDOR"

MAIN: Catherine of Valois weds Henry V in 1420 – but it would be her second marriage, to a servant, that launched the Tudors

INSET: Could Edmund Beaufort have been the true biological father of Edmund Tudor, and thus Henry VII's grandfather?

WERE THE TUDORS REALLY TUDORS?

The great survivors of the Wars of the Roses were a half-Welsh, half-French family who took the surname Tidyr, or Tudur, or Tudor. It was Henry Tudor who emerged victorious from the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, took the crown and, as Henry VII of England, went on to establish perhaps the most famous royal dynasty of them all.

The origins of this remarkable family are surprisingly foggy. Their first connection to the English crown came through Henry VII's grandmother, Catherine of Valois, widow of Henry V and mother of Henry VI. As dowager queen, Catherine caused a stir by secretly marrying her lowly servant, Owen Tudor. Plenty of romantic rumours have swirled around that union, but whatever the case, during the early 1430s Catherine gave birth to several children who took the Tudor name, most notably Henry VII's father, Edmund, and another boy named Jasper, who helped Henry take the throne.

There are intriguing questions, however, about whether they were actually Tudors. Shortly before Catherine became involved with Owen, there was a widespread suggestion that she was having an affair with Edmund Beaufort, the future Duke of Somerset, who would be killed at the first battle of St Albans, in 1455. This rumour was taken so seriously that Parliament issued a special statute restricting the right of queens of England to remarry.

It has been speculated that Catherine's marriage to Owen Tudor was then contracted to cover up her politically dangerous relationship with Edmund Beaufort. In that case, is it possible that Edmund Tudor was not a Tudor at all, but had actually been given the forename of his real father?

Historian Gerald Harriss made precisely this suggestion in a footnote written in 1988: "By its very nature the evidence for Edmund 'Tudor's' parentage is less than conclusive, but such facts as can be assembled permit the agreeable possibility that Edmund 'Tudor' and Margaret Beaufort [ie. Edmund's wife and Henry VII's mother] were first cousins and that the royal house of 'Tudor' sprang in fact from Beauforts on both sides." Wouldn't that be something? ▶

"NOTHING CAUSED SO MUCH TROUBLE AS THE SUGGESTION THAT EDWARD IV HAD MARRIED SOMEONE ELSE"

MAIN: An illuminated miniature of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville's wedding; in reality, the ceremony took place in secret

INSET: Elizabeth had eight surviving children with Edward IV, including Henry VII's future wife

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X3

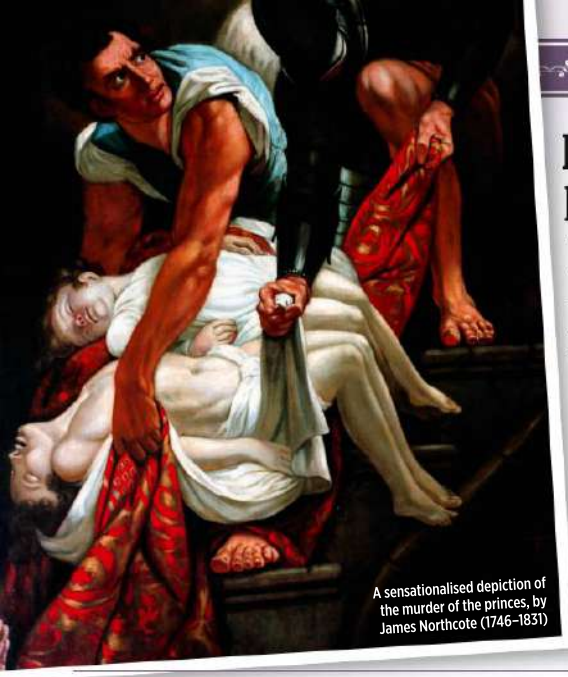
WHO WAS EDWARD IV'S REAL WIFE?

The history books usually state that Edward IV's wife was Elizabeth Woodville (or 'Wydeville'). That in itself is a delicious fact: when Edward married her, probably sometime in 1464, she came from a family of middle rank, was a widow with two children, and instead of being a foreign princess capable of forming diplomatic ties she was one of the king's subjects – from a family of Lancastrians, no less.

Edward's choice of queen upset his closest political ally, the Earl of Warwick, caused diplomatic trouble with more than one other country, and annoyed a significant number of English nobles. Nothing, however, caused so much trouble as the suggestion that Edward IV was, in fact, promised to another.

Following Edward IV's death in 1483, his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester claimed that, before the Woodville marriage took place, Edward had promised to marry Lady Eleanor Butler (née Talbot), a daughter of famous soldier John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. Richard argued that since Edward had once promised to marry Eleanor, he had not subsequently been legally entitled to marry Elizabeth. This made their union invalid, and their children bastards.

This claim was the basis of Richard's usurpation of the crown. He made it known that Edward IV's young son and successor, Edward V, was illegitimate, and instead claimed the throne for himself, as Richard III. But was it true? Conveniently, in 1483 the case could not be properly tested, since Lady Eleanor had died 15 years previously. Today, those seeking to rehabilitate Richard's reputation frequently rely on the 'pre-contract' argument to defend his actions.



A sensationalised depiction of the murder of the princes, by James Northcote (1746–1831)

DID RICHARD III KILL THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER?

This is perhaps the greatest mystery of them all, and certainly the question most likely to start a fistfight among any given group of medievalists.

For centuries Richard III's name has been blackened thanks to his usurpation of the throne in 1483 and the subsequent disappearance of his nephews, Edward V and Richard, Duke of York – better known as 'the Princes in the Tower' (*see feature on page 54*).

Did the boys die? If so, who was to blame? Did Richard have them murdered? Or did they die of natural causes? Were there other agents at work? And if so, who? Could, as one contemporary source suggested, Richard's sometime ally, the oily and feckless Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, be the prime mover behind the boys' deaths? Or was there an even more sinister conspiracy, perhaps involving Henry Tudor's cunning mother, Margaret Beaufort?

For many Ricardians, the charge of murdering the Princes in the Tower is a heinous and unjust accusation levelled at a grievously misunderstood monarch, but the debate rages on and the mystery continues to enthrall.

WAS PERKIN WARBECK REALLY RICHARD IV?

A common date for the end of the Wars of the Roses is 1485, when Henry VII defeated Richard III at the battle of Bosworth Field. In fact, the threat of a revived dynastic war to put a Yorkist king back on the English throne haunted England deep into the Tudor years.

One of the most dangerous times was the 1490s, when the threat of plots sponsored from the continent seriously unsettled Henry VII's fragile regime. For several years the figurehead for these plots was a young man who claimed to be Richard, Duke of York – the younger of the Princes in the Tower. If crowned, he would have taken the throne as Richard IV.

It is easy now to scoff at all this, certain that this man was Perkin Warbeck, a pretender. But at the time, this supposed Richard IV had serious support from rulers in Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland and the Holy Roman Empire, and he attempted several sea invasions of England.

Events came to a head in 1497 when the pseudo-Richard succeeded in landing in Cornwall and joined up with rebels in the West Country. He was captured and brought before Henry VII, where he confessed that he was not Richard, but a French-Flemish merchant's son, a troublemaker and a puppet for Tudor enemies.

At first, Henry was merciful, keeping Warbeck at court and parading him in public to assure people that he was not the real Richard. This peaceful situation did not last long. In 1498, Warbeck escaped, only to be recaptured and placed in the Tower of London, where he was caught up in further plotting against the Crown, this time in league with another Yorkist claimant, Edward, Earl of Warwick, son of the late George, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's brother. Again, the plotting was foiled and in 1499 Warbeck was forced once more to confess his imposture, and was hanged at Tyburn.

Yet doubts do remain. Warbeck is widely considered a pretender, but were his confessions made under duress? The plots against Henry have more than a whiff of a set-up about them: could it be that Warbeck really was Richard, entangled in a nightmare of Henry's concoction and forced to deny his own birthright?

Most historians say not. But the possibility remains tantalising enough to consider.

ABOVE: **The pretender Perkin Warbeck reads his confession, but did he give it under duress?**

LEFT: **One of the few contemporary portraits of Warbeck, who claimed to be Richard, Duke of York**

DAN JONES is an award-winning historian, author and television presenter. His new book, *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages,* is on sale now, published by Head of Zeus

THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER

The disappearance of Edward V and his younger brother, Richard, remains one of British history's most enduring mysteries

More than 500 years on, the events of the summer of 1483 are still unclear; the shrouds of mystery haven't lifted despite countless theories and findings over the intervening centuries. The case of the disappearance – and presumed murder – of two young princes remains very much open.

Since the 15th century, the story of the Princes in the Tower has piqued the curiosity of historians and captured the imagination of novelists and, in William Shakespeare's case, playwrights. It's a tale of young innocence versus heartless evil, with the brothers' uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester (aka the newly crowned Richard III) cast as the chief villain.

On 9 April 1483, Edward IV succumbed to a short illness, leaving his 12-year-old son Edward as the new monarch. At the time of his father's passing, young Edward was at Ludlow Castle, while his nine-year-old brother Richard was in London, probably with his mother. On hearing the news of his brother's death, Richard, Duke of Gloucester travelled south from Middleham Castle, intercepting the young king Edward at Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire, on 30 April.

MAIN: **Were the princes murdered while in the Tower of London? The mystery remains unsolved**

RIGHT: **While not exactly like this illustration, Richard did make sure to separate the princes from their mother**

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

VYING FOR POWER

Edward IV's plans for the succession are unclear, but it was eventually decreed that his only surviving brother, Gloucester, would act as lord protector until the new king was of an age to rule himself. Yet Gloucester didn't hear of Edward's demise for six days, a delay which some have assigned to the princes' mother, Elizabeth Woodville. Not being of noble birth, and with supporters of Lancaster on her side of the family tree – and, indeed, knowing that factions were going to be vying for power in the wake of her husband's death – she may well have used this time to solidify her own position within the changing royal landscape.

When Gloucester did hear the news, he rushed to Stony Stratford to intercept ▶

RIGHT: **A 19th-century painting of the princes, by John Everett Millais**

BELOW: **Edward V rode into London with his uncle, Richard, and waited for a coronation that would never come**

BELOW RIGHT: **Richard had to remove the princes' other uncle, Earl Rivers**

ABOVE: **The staircase underneath which two skeletons of children were found in 1674**

RIGHT: **The princes were possibly kept above this gateway in the so-called 'Bloody' Tower**

"FOR THOSE BELIEVING THAT MURDER WAS AFOOT, THE NEW KING, RICHARD III, WAS THE CHIEF SUSPECT"

Edward, with the stated intention of escorting him to London personally. But Richard proved to be anything but the avuncular relative. En route, Gloucester met the boys' maternal uncle, Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, who he sent first to Sheriff Hutton and then to Pontefract Castle, along with two associates, where he was later executed. Gloucester took possession of Edward, explaining that the Woodvilles' imprisonment had foiled a plot to snatch the throne from the boy; together, uncle and nephew travelled to the capital, where the young king was lodged at the Tower of London, the traditional residence of monarchs ahead of their coronation.

Understandably mistrustful of Gloucester, Elizabeth kept her other son, Richard, and his sisters, close to her and sought sanctuary at Westminster Abbey. There, Gloucester couldn't get to them, but a month later, believing the coronation to be imminent, she allowed Richard to join his brother in the Tower. Elizabeth would never see either of her sons again.

While preparations for Edward's coronation were underway – including the minting of new coins featuring his image – Gloucester repeatedly pushed back the date before postponing the event indefinitely. A move to disqualify Edward's claim to the throne gathered pace and, by mid-June, Parliament had declared the princes to be illegitimate. The belief was that, due to a pre-contract of marriage that Edward IV made with Lady Eleanor Butler (née Talbot), his and Elizabeth's marriage was invalid and their children illegitimate. Edward V's legitimacy as king was extinguished and Gloucester was crowned on 6 July as Richard III.

THE PRINCES VANISH

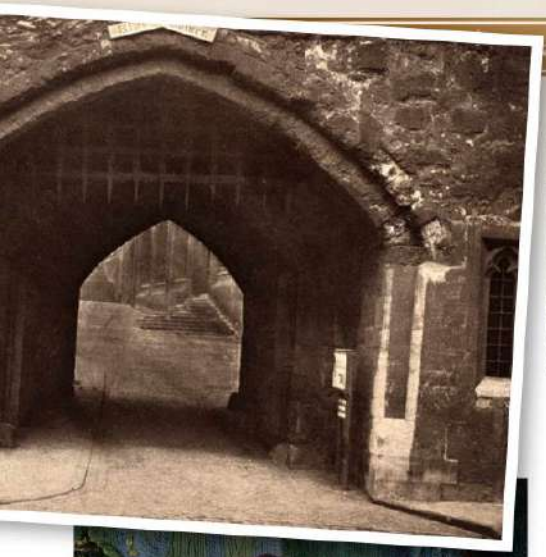
As the new king enjoyed his coronation, the fate of the princes in his custody was unknown. The last recorded sighting of the pair appeared in the *Great Chronicle of London*. On 16 June, it noted that Edward and Richard were seen "shooting and playing in the garden of the Tower sundry times". There are no recorded sightings of them after this date.

The most reliable chronicler of that summer's events was Dominic Mancini, a visiting Italian friar who recorded what he saw and heard in a report titled *The Occupation of the Throne of England by Richard III*. Only discovered on the shelves of a French library in 1934, the report was prepared for one of the counsellors to Louis XI of France. In its pages, Mancini wrote of how the princes had been "withdrawn to the inner apartments of the Tower proper, and day by day began to be seen more rarely behind the bars and windows until at length they ceased to appear altogether. Already there is a suspicion that they have been done away with."

For those believing murder was afoot,

The Lord Mayor of London, Edmund Shaa – whose brother had given a sermon preaching of the princes' illegitimacy – offered Richard the throne

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X6



William Shakespeare's Richard III is an unambiguous villain, ordering his knight Sir James Tyrell to kill the boys

the new king was the chief suspect (and has remained so ever since). At the time, Richard III's part in any possible killings merely took the form of rumour; no one directly accused him of such a plot. Instead, a theory developed that Richard had commanded one of his trusted knights, Sir James Tyrell, to carry out the bloody deed, and that Tyrell had in turn commissioned two men, Miles Forest and John Dighton, to do it for him.

This was certainly the version of events favoured by Thomas More, who wrote about the princes' disappearance in his unfinished biography, *The History of Richard III*. "The innocent children, lying in their beds, Miles Forest and John Dighton, about midnight, came into the chamber and suddenly lapped them up among the clothes, so bewrapped them and entangled them, keeping down by

Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, has been implicated in the murder of the princes

force the feather bed and pillows hard unto their mouths, that within a while smothered and stifled, they gave up to God their innocent souls."

More's evocative account is far from watertight, though. His is not a contemporaneous report, unlike that of Mancini. Not only was he writing about events 30 years after they allegedly occurred, but he was employed as the chancellor to Henry VIII, meaning that a pro-Tudor take on the story, one that skewered Richard as the plot's architect, was perhaps inevitable.

RUMOURS AND REMAINS

There were counter-rumours about how the boys were killed – poison and drowning were mentioned – as well as the naming of other suspects. Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, was a close ally of Richard's, albeit someone with his own tenuous claim to the throne, which he pursued in a rebellion against the king that ended with his execution in the winter of 1483. Henry Tudor, the future king and husband of the princes' sister Elizabeth of York, has also since been cited as a potential murderer.

But not everyone believed the princes were dead. In 1491, a man by the name of Perkin Warbeck emerged claiming to be Richard, the younger of the princes. His absence, he explained, was down to having been spared his life by his brother's killers, after which he had taken an oath of secrecy and escaped to Flanders, where he'd been living since. His claims appeared credible, with even the princes' aunt, Margaret of York, believing him to be her nephew. James IV of Scotland and Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor, were also taken in – or, at least, it suited them politically to back the story. With the crown in Tudor hands, Warbeck launched two separate invasions of England to take the throne, but, following his capture, he confessed to be an imposter and was executed in 1499.

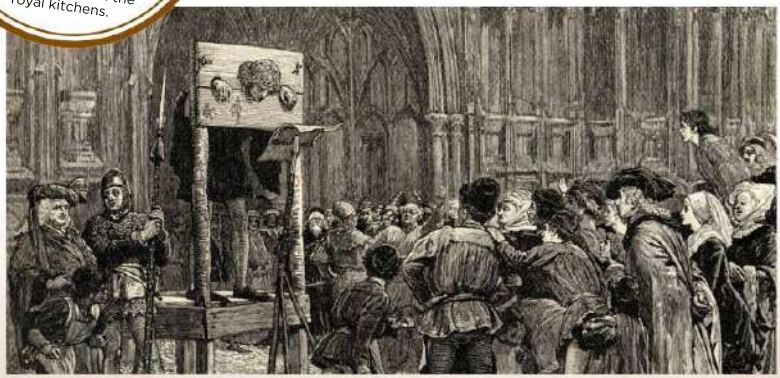
The true fate of the princes remained a matter of rumour and hearsay for the best part of two centuries until a gruesome discovery was made in 1674. Charles II had ordered the demolition of a small part of the Tower of London. Three metres under a disused staircase, workmen uncovered a wooden case containing two human skeletons, diminutive in size. One eyewitness described the bones as having "pieces of rag and velvet" attached to them. At the time of the princes' disappearance, velvet was a fabric reserved for the highest levels of society.

Four years later, Charles had the bones buried in Westminster Abbey, where they still lie today. In 1933, the skeletons were temporarily exhumed and examined, the conclusion of which was that they belonged to two boys of pre-pubescent age. Could they be the princes? Until another exhumation is ordered – accompanied by a forensic examination using the same sophisticated 21st-century techniques that successfully identified the remains of Richard III in 2013 – English history's greatest murder mystery looks set to remain unsolved.

DID YOU KNOW?

FOOL ME ONCE...

Another pretender to the throne was Lambert Simnel, son of a joiner, who Yorkists claimed to be Edward, Earl of Warwick. Henry VII ended the resulting rebellion at the battle of Stoke Field in 1487, and put Simnel to work in the royal kitchens.



The pretender Perkin Warbeck was made to confess publicly so that everyone would know he was not the real prince Richard

BIRTH OF THE TUDORS

The wars between York and Lancaster ended with a uniting of the roses and a new royal dynasty

The death of Richard III at the battle of Bosworth Field (*see page 48*) meant the end of Plantagenet rule in England. The succeeding house of Tudor would provide monarchs such as the gargantuan historical figures Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, while significantly reshaping the country's religious, political and cultural landscapes.

Born at Pembroke Castle in 1457, Henry Tudor spent 14 years living in Brittany after the Yorkist King Edward IV regained the throne from Henry's uncle, Henry VI. By the end of 1483, Henry had become the most credible alternative to Richard III, a perception bolstered by his pledge to wed Edward's daughter, Elizabeth of York, a marriage that would unite the houses of York and Lancaster. Already the favoured choice as king for Lancastrian supporters, the marriage vow also secured the backing of Yorkists disillusioned by Richard's power-grab.

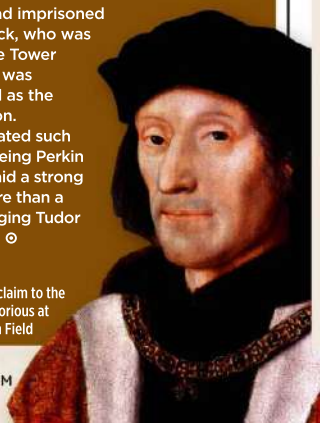
After an initial failed landing in England, Henry – now heavily supplied by the French and boasting the support of the Lancastrian-leaning Woodvilles, the in-laws of Edward IV – successfully landed in his homeland of Pembrokeshire in early August 1485, from where he and his growing army marched to that decisive victory at Bosworth Field.

Once king, Henry VII offered evidence of his keen political mind. Not only did he honour his pledge to marry Elizabeth of York, but had Parliament repeal *Titulus Regius*, the legislation that had ruled Edward IV's children to be illegitimate. Doing so legitimised his new bride and weakened any attempts to disclaim his right to the throne. However, having largely united the houses of York and Lancaster, and consigned the Wars of the Roses to the history books, Henry would see several attempts to overthrow him. The first was the Stafford and Lovell rebellion of 1486, an armed uprising that Henry quashed before his army was needed.

The following year, a band of Yorkists rose up and presented a young boy named Lambert Simnel as Edward IV's nephew, Edward, Earl of Warwick, the true claimant to the throne. The rebellion was barely credible. In the immediate aftermath of Bosworth, Henry had imprisoned the real Earl of Warwick, who was still incarcerated in the Tower while Lambert Simnel was being paraded around as the figurehead for rebellion.

Having easily eliminated such opposition – the last being Perkin Warbeck – Henry VII laid a strong foundation for the more than a century of game-changing Tudor rule that was to follow. ⊙

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL



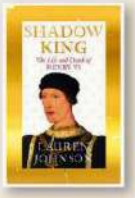
Henry VII had a tenuous claim to the throne, but emerged victorious at Bosworth Field

ALAMY X3

GET HOOKED

If we've whetted your appetite for all things Plantagenet, why not explore the topic further with our pick of books, films and podcasts

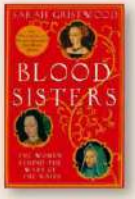
BOOKS



Shadow King: The Life and Death of Henry VI

By Lauren Johnson (Head of Zeus, 2019)

Lauren Johnson tells the remarkable and sometimes shocking story of Henry VI – the pious, gentle, well-intentioned man, plagued by bouts of mental illness, who lost his throne and saw his kingdom descend into the violent chaos of the Wars of the Roses.



Blood Sisters: The Women Behind the Wars of the Roses

By Sarah Gristwood (HarperCollins, 2012)

Sarah Gristwood sheds light on the women of the Wars of the Roses – from Cecily Neville, who was deprived of being queen when her husband died at the battle of Wakefield, to Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, whose love and ambition for her son knew no bounds.

Edward IV (Penguin Monarchs): The Summer King

By AJ Pollard (Allen Lane, 2016)

Historian AJ Pollard reveals another side to the able, handsome and charming man who usurped the English throne from his feeble Lancastrian predecessor Henry VI, casting Edward IV as a man of limited vision who lived a life of epicurean excess.

ONLINE AND AUDIO

▶ **The Princes in the Tower: A Medieval Murder Mystery:** This exclusive podcast series from HistoryExtra, featuring Lauren Johnson and other experts, delves into one of history's most famous cold cases. Listen at *historyextra.com/princes-tower-exclusive-history-podcast-series*

History Extra

▶ **For podcasts, features, quizzes, interviews and more on the Wars of the Roses, visit our website: *historyextra.com/period/plantagenet***

WATCH

The White Queen

(BBC One, now streaming on Amazon Prime and BritBox UK)

Based on Philippa Gregory's historical novel series, *The White Queen* follows the fortunes of three women who played key roles in the Wars of the Roses.

The Hollow Crown (series 2)

(BBC Two, now streaming on Amazon Prime and BritBox UK)

The second series of the BAFTA-award winning adaptations of Shakespeare's history plays covers the Wars of the Roses, depicting one of the playwright's most famous anti-heroes: Richard III.

THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON

UPCOMING EVENTS

09 OCTOBER: 9AM–6PM - INCLUDING WINE RECEPTION

EXPERIENCING POLITICS AND POLITICAL CULTURE IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND, C. 1300-1815

EARLY CAREERS RESEARCHERS CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY DR LAURA FLANNIGAN, JEN CADDICK AND MURRAY TREMELLEN

Popular imagination of late medieval and early modern Britain and Ireland has been dominated by famous monarchs, cunning ministers, and intrigues within the halls of power. Yet this period also saw the rise of political society, the 'public sphere', and increasingly 'national' solidarities. What did this mean for the experience of politics across these isles? This interdisciplinary conference will explore the ways in which politics and political culture were understood, interacted with, imposed, performed, dissented from and disrupted in Britain between the fourteenth- and nineteenth-centuries.

29 OCTOBER: 2PM–5PM - INCLUDING WINE RECEPTION

INTERTWINED HISTORIES PANEL SESSION: UK AND IRELAND

ORGANISED BY DANIELLE WILSON HIGGINS, COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGER AND DR LINDA GRANT, GOVERNANCE MANAGER

In 2020 we saw a shift in the way Society views and engages with contested heritage and histories. This panel session will address issues of slavery, colonialism, representation and community. Panelists include **Dr Michael Taylor** author, *The Interest: How the British Establishment Resisted the Abolition of Slavery*, **Professor Miri Rubin** on the contribution of Jewish communities in the medieval and early modern period, **Shahed Saleem** speaking about his work on British Mosques and community representations through structures, **Josephine Beaton** taking a grassroots look at multicultural UK history in the classroom and **Dr Laura McAtackney** looking at the legacy of colonialism in Ireland.

FREE TO ATTEND BUT BOOKING IS REQUIRED.
YOU CAN BOOK A PLACE ON OUR WEBSITE TO ATTEND.
EVENTS WILL TAKE PLACE IN PERSON AND ONLINE.

BOOK ONLINE: WWW.SAL.ORG.UK/EVENTS

Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE

LETTERS TO SANTA COMPETITION

ENTER TO WIN

With Christmas around the corner, the *BBC History Revealed* team has been thinking about what people in the past might have put on their Christmas list. And we'd like your help!

If you – or someone you know – is aged 6–13, we'd like you to pretend that you are a character from history and write a letter to Santa, sharing what you've been doing this year and telling him what you would like for Christmas.

You might decide to be a fed-up Henry VIII, who is tired of his current wife and wants a new one. Or perhaps you're Emmeline Pankhurst asking Santa for his help with campaigning for women's right to vote.

Draw your own stamp
Dear Santa...
I've been very good this year. I went to the moon!
Please can you send me a new pair of boots. I seem to have left mine on the moon.
Thank you
From Neil Armstrong
Draw your own stamp
1922
Dear Santa...
I have been a really good boy this year; I have finally found Tutankhamun's tomb. I seem to be cursed though, I keep breaking my magnifying glass.
Please send me a new one for christmas.
From, Howard Carter

You can find out everything you need to know about the competition, including terms and conditions, how to enter, judging criteria and a letter template that you can download and print, at

historyextra.com/letterstosanta

MAIN: **Munitionettes at Woolwich Arsenal, London, working on small arms cartridges**

RIGHT: **With the men fighting the war, women (and girls) were encouraged to join the workforce**

YOUNG GUNS

That many women took on new roles in munitions factories during World War I is well-known, but what is surprising, says author **Lou Kuenzler**, is just how young many of these workers were – and how challenging the conditions in which they toiled would be

The early 20th-century footballer Lily Parr is a legend in the women's game. Scouted for the famous Dick, Kerr's Ladies team when only 14 years old, the winger with a "kick like a mule", according to one teammate, was a larger-than-life sporting great credited with 43 goals during her first season and around 1,000 in total. But the team that Parr played for had not been formed, in 1917, out of desire to showcase and further women's sport. It sprang from wartime necessity, as women took up many of the jobs previously held by men in the factories producing munitions for the armed forces.

Newly formed female football teams flourished in the munitions factories across Britain during World War I. Nearly every factory involved in war work had its own team of 'munitionettes', as the women working in the industry were almost universally known. When researching my new book, *Our Beautiful Game* – set during the war and about a girl named Polly and her love of football – I knew I would find plenty of references to young players out on the pitch, such ▶

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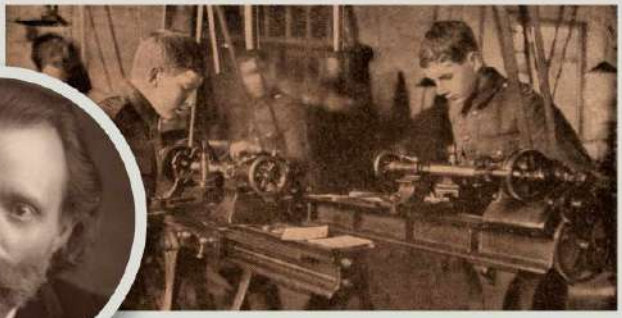
The manufacture of artillery shells posed severe risks, and was often done by children

A girl inspects a casing at a munitions factory, c1915. A welfare department would only be established the next year



as Parr. But I quickly uncovered evidence of many teenagers – and even young children – working among the explosives and weaponry in production at these sites.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Munitions factories were dangerous places, with eye injuries a constant problem or hair getting caught in the machinery. Workers lost fingers and maimed their hands. Varnishes and dyes caused nausea, fainting, headaches and death. Those working with TNT were in even greater peril, of course, earning themselves the nickname 'canaries' due to the jaundice effect from the chemicals, which turned their skin bright yellow. They also suffered from a range of ailments, including nasal and throat problems, constipation, diarrhoea, blurred vision, skin rashes, depression, and fatal lung disease. Explosions, in which women lost their lives, were often covered up by the government to avoid local panic.

In post-Edwardian Britain, it was still common for children as young as 14 to be out of school and working, especially in industrial areas, and this trend only increased with the war. As family life and society in general were disrupted by the unprecedented upheaval of the conflict, wages available to munitions workers brought large contingents of adolescents to the factories.

In December 1916, the popular British writer Sir Hall Caine published *Our Girls: Their Work for the War*, a collection of stories detailing women's working lives. It was designed to be a gift for proud munitionettes to send to their men fighting at the front. While touring one factory, probably Woolwich Arsenal in southeast London, Caine met an 11-year-old girl who had earned five shillings for her first week's work. He does not appear to find her presence in any way unusual or unsettling.

ABOVE: **While boys were too young to fight, they could do their bit making shells, like these students of Bradfield College**

LEFT: **Sir Hall Caine wrote countless patriotic pieces during the war, including about working women**

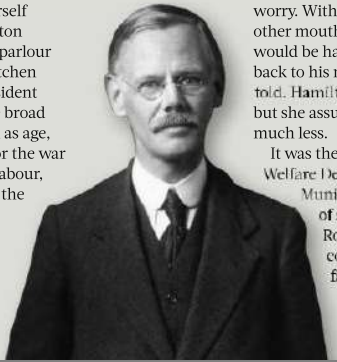
At the opposite end of the scale, he noted a group of elderly women boiling lead in huge vats. Watching them as they ladled out the scaly grey liquid, Caine found it impossible not to think of the "witches in *Macbeth*", especially when the white hair of one woman "falls from its knot, and, in lifting her ladle, her gaunt figure sways across the light". Florid poetics aside, all this is surprising when officials responsible for recruiting women workers were told to address themselves to those between the ages of 18 and 35 years old.

One munitions worker, Peggy Hamilton, wrote a wonderfully insightful memoir of her experiences, *Three Years or the Duration*, dedicated to two very young boys, Jimmy and Harry, she met on the factory floor. Only 19 herself when the war broke out, Hamilton was raised in a house with two parlour maids, two housemaids, two kitchen maids, a housekeeper, and a resident handyman – demonstrating the broad spectrum of social class, as well as age, to be found working together for the war effort. Unprepared for manual labour, she described the conditions in the Birmingham factory where she met Jimmy as "frightful".

They worked in dark, airless, grimy buildings without heating during the bitterly cold winters. Although unsure of Jimmy's exact age, she thought he looked no more than seven or eight, and, notwithstanding that young friends of her own family would have been better nourished, she depicted "a little boy, hollow-cheeked, with big dark rings around his eyes". Hamilton recalled how he worked at a great pace, winding endless strips of shim brass: "Hour after hour he stood there at this wearisome job, a little robot, and his speed never slackened."

Although Hamilton endured long shifts from seven in the morning until seven at night, six days a week, her young workmate was always there before she started and worked an hour or two after she left. It is unsurprising then that she worried about him "sweating away his young life in this filthy building". When she asked the foreman about Jimmy, however, she was told not to worry. With his father away at war and other mouths to feed at home, Jimmy would be happy to bring as much money back to his mother as he could, she was told. Hamilton was paid a pound a week, but she assumed a child would be paid much less.

B Seebohm Rowntree monitored working conditions in factories, but not all of them



It was the responsibility of the Welfare Department at the Ministry of Munitions, under the directorship of social reformer B Seebohm Rowntree, to monitor working conditions in the munitions factories, including toilets,

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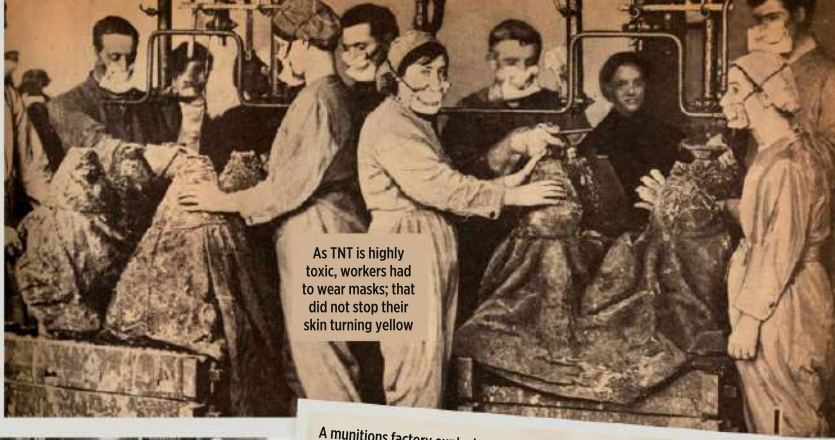

As TNT is highly toxic, workers had to wear masks; that did not stop their skin turning yellow

Workers load nitration pans at the largest cordite factory in Britain, built in Gretna

A munitions factory explosion at Silvertown, London, in 1917 killed 73 people and injured over 400

Away from the work, factories gave women the chance to form teams and take to the football pitch

"Any steel chip Peggy got in her eye would have to wait until morning to be removed with a penknife"

eating facilities, industrial safety, first aid rooms, and special clothing and breathing apparatus. However, this organisation had not been established until December 1915, by which time so many existing factories had been turned over to weapons production that the department was only able to focus on the new, purpose-built sites springing up all over the country in response to the shortage of weaponry.

Hamilton recalls the vast difference in conditions at the various factories she worked in. While the new sites were well-equipped and closely monitored, some of the smaller ad hoc ones, which were more likely to employ youngsters, often had little or nothing in the way of support and facilities. Even by her final placement of the war, the London & Scottish Engineering Company had no official first aid facility and any injury was dealt with by the foreman. As she worked nights, and the foreman was on the day shift, any steel chip she got in her eye would have to wait until morning, when it would be removed by him with his penknife.

STANDARDS AND FREEDOMS

Conversely, the munitionettes were often held to strict standards and could be called in front of tribunals for a vast array of infringements, including: leaving a job without permission (even if it was to escape sexual harassment); being late; wearing the wrong clothes; and taking part in a strike. It was only with the Munitions of War (Amendment) Act 1916 that stipulated the presence of at least one woman at tribunals where women's cases were heard.

One such assessor described how "young girls, some of them almost children" appeared before the court "tongue-tied with terror of the ordeal". A 14-year-old Birmingham girl was so distressed that she threw herself into the canal two days before her tribunal. She was rescued, but remained unconscious when the case was called. In another case, a Teesside munitions firm took a woman to tribunal over her refusal to carry cast iron frames weighing about 45kg. Men doing the same work were allowed assistance.

Yet despite the dangers, long hours and lack of welfare, this employment offered something to female workers: liberation. They were able to travel around the country with greater freedom and earn higher wages than ever. A sense of joy and pride in the job was captured repeatedly in recollections of the time. Workers often wore flowers in their lapels or bright coloured laces. These unprecedented female spaces also led to the rise of women and young girls enjoying a new shared leisure time, such as playing football – something that, until 1921 when women's football came under stricter regulation, gave them a measure of freedom like never before.

GET HOOKED

READ

Lou Kuenzler's recent book, *Our Beautiful Game*, is on sale now, published by Faber

10 QUOTATIONS THAT DEFINED THE 20th CENTURY

Words have the power to alter the course of history. They can harden the resolve of an entire nation or people, encapsulate the ideals of a movement, and evoke joy – or provoke anger – long after they have been said. To mark the 100th issue of *BBC History Revealed*, historian **Dr Seán Lang** explores 10 impactful quotations of the last century...

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”

Franklin D Roosevelt, 1933

The United States lay devastated by the Great Depression, an economic collapse without precedent that destroyed the country’s global image as a land of opportunity and reduced millions of Americans to poverty and destitution. The governor of New York, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had run for and won the presidency on the promise of a massive recovery programme, dubbed the ‘New Deal’, but he knew he could do nothing unless the American people first regained their self-belief.

In his inaugural address on 4 March 1933, Roosevelt reassured them that they had nothing to fear, except fear itself – “nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror, which paralyses needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

The New Deal lasted throughout the 1930s until World War II set the country back towards full employment. Through the programme of reforms, regulations and projects, Roosevelt understood the power of words. He explained policies simply and clearly to radio listeners in his ‘fireside chats’, reassuring Americans that they had what it would take to improve their own lives and that the government would help. Roosevelt was elected an unprecedented four times, but it was that first inaugural message that set the tone for his time in office and helped give back the US its self-belief.

ABOVE: **President Roosevelt (*right*) enacted job creation programmes; these employed workers are shown the ropes of their new work**

BELOW: **Churchill gives his famed V for Victory**

“We shall never surrender”

Winston Churchill, 1940

By June 1940, it seemed that Hitler had won his war. He had conquered Poland; launched a devastating assault in Denmark and Norway; and attacked in the west, invading the Netherlands and Belgium, and storming through northern France to cut off the British army and much of the French. It was only a matter of time before France was forced to surrender and German troops entered triumphantly into Paris. To any impartial observer, it seemed obvious that Britain had no choice but to seek a peace settlement with Hitler. But Winston Churchill, Britain’s pugnacious and controversial new prime minister, decided to ignore those pressing him to do just that.

In an electrifying speech to the House of Commons on 4 June 1940, later broadcast on the BBC, he declared that Britain would fight on and never surrender – that “we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be”. Churchill knew that Britain’s navy and air force would make a German invasion hazardous, though not impossible, and that the only chance of defeating Nazism was to keep going until the United States could join the war. His words defined the stubborn defiance and ‘Dunkirk spirit’, which saved not just Britain but the world from a Nazi victory. ▶

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The atom bomb is a paper tiger

Mao Zedong, 1946

The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 redefined the world. Leaders had always been able to plunge their peoples into war, but now they could wipe out whole cities, even countries, with a single order. While the United States was the only one with nuclear capability at first, the Soviet Union was not far behind thanks to communist spies in the west passing nuclear secrets to Moscow.

In an interview with American journalist Anna Louise Strong in 1946, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, described the atom bomb as a "paper tiger", something that looks more dangerous than it is. Mao meant that all governments depended on the support of the people, and they would never consent to using atomic weapons. The phrase was taken another way: no government would dare use such weapons for fear of provoking a response from the other side. This was the idea behind the doctrine of 'mutually assured destruction' during the Cold War, as the power and number of nuclear weapons intensified. Even then, the world came perilously close to disaster on more than one occasion.

Well, he would, wouldn't he?

Mandy Rice-Davies, 1963

This ordinary retort marked an unlikely watershed in British social history. Marilyn (better known as Mandy) Rice-Davies was a model and dancer working in London's Soho, where she met Christine Keeler and her friend and protector, Stephen Ward. A successful osteopath, Ward was well-known in high society, hosting parties and introducing girls like Keeler and Rice-Davies to his well-connected friends, including the Secretary of State for War John Profumo and the Conservative peer Lord Astor. A public scandal ensued when the truth of Ward's parties was revealed, especially with reports that Keeler had slept both with Profumo and a Russian naval attaché, Eugene Ivanov, which made the affair a diplomatic furore.

Rice-Davies was a witness at Ward's trial. It was widely held at the time that people in high society were trustworthy and honourable, incapable of the lewd behaviour associated with 'lower' classes. When it was put to Rice-Davies that Lord Astor denied her claim of an affair, the assumption was that his word was worth more than hers. Her cheeky response – "Well, he would, wouldn't he?" – suggested that the aristocracy were no more honourable than anyone else. The remark caused a sensation.

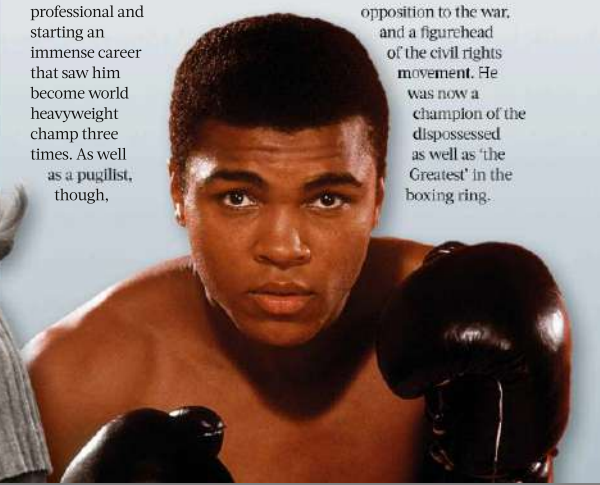
I am the greatest

Cassius Clay, 1963

Muhammad Ali, who changed his name from Cassius Clay in 1964, was always much more than a boxer: he was a role model for young black people around the world and a major international celebrity, mixing his sporting triumphs with irrepressible charm and wit.

Boxing had long been a way for poor Americans to better themselves. Clay, who came from the segregated South, won the light heavyweight gold medal at the age of 18 at the 1960 Rome Olympics before turning professional and starting an immense career that saw him become world heavyweight champ three times. As well as a pugilist, though, Clay was a charismatic self-promoting poet always showing his gifts for trash talking. In 1963, shortly before announcing his conversion to Islam and his new name, he issued a record of rhythmically-spoken poetry entitled *I Am the Greatest*.

Ali continued to describe himself proudly as 'the Greatest', but he put his reputation and career on the line, and even risked jail, by refusing to serve in the US Army in 1967 as the war in Vietnam raged. His case went to the Supreme Court and Ali became a symbol of growing American opposition to the war, and a figurehead of the civil rights movement. He was now a champion of the dispossessed as well as 'the Greatest' in the boxing ring.



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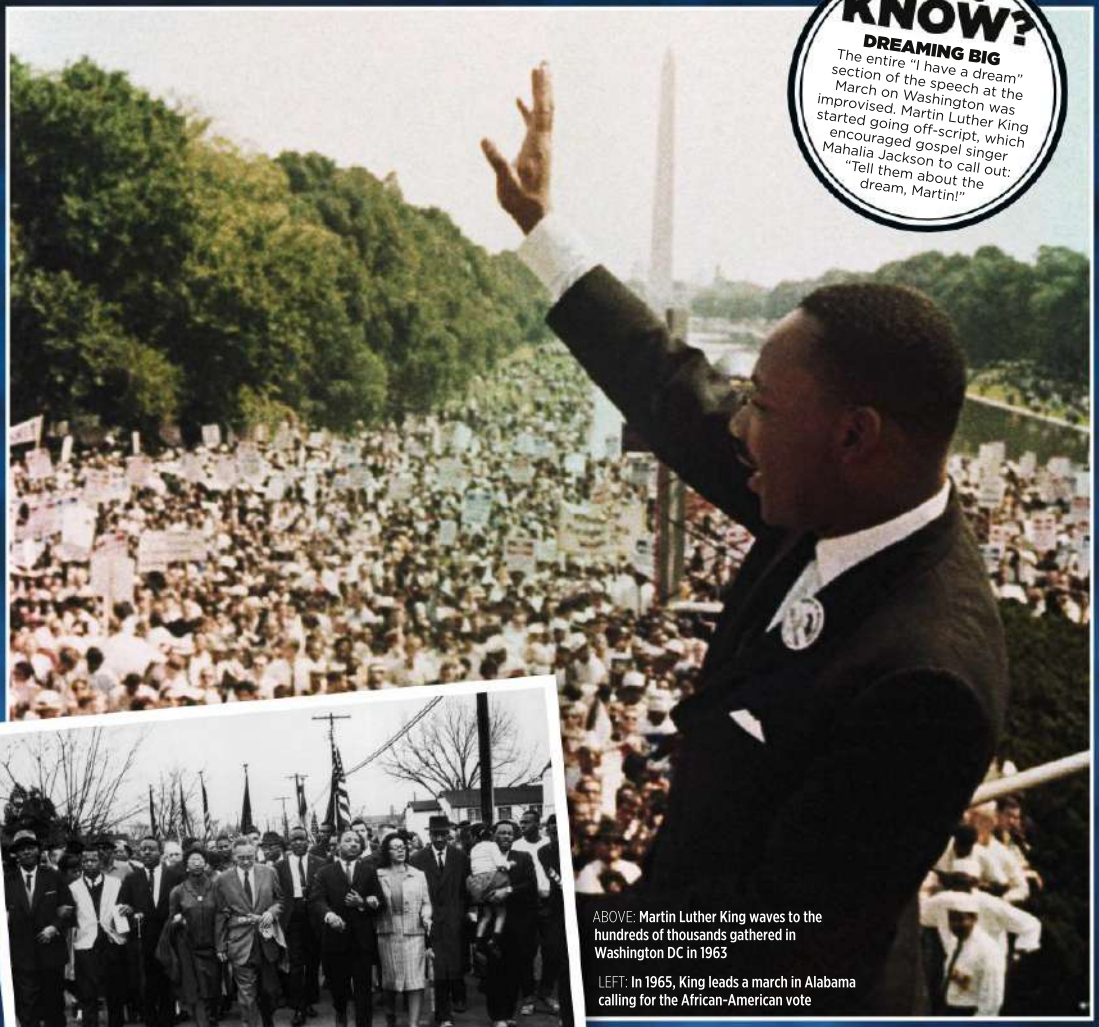


DID YOU KNOW?

DREAMING BIG

The entire "I have a dream" section of the speech at the March on Washington was improvised. Martin Luther King started going off-script, which encouraged gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to call out: "Tell them about the dream, Martin!"

ABOVE: **Martin Luther King waves to the hundreds of thousands gathered in Washington DC in 1963**

LEFT: **In 1965, King leads a march in Alabama calling for the African-American vote**

"I have a dream"

Dr Martin Luther King Jr, 1963

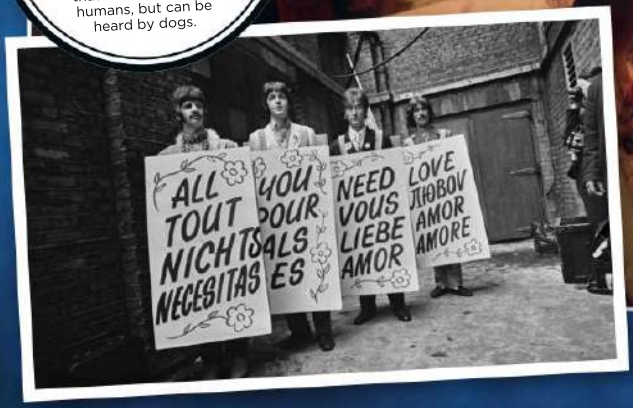
Martin Luther King Jr's iconic speech was delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, an enormous statue of the US president who had ended slavery in the United States. By the 1960s, however, true emancipation was still far off as African-Americans faced entrenched legal discrimination and police violence. King, who had made his name leading protests against racial segregation, was speaking to a huge civil rights rally calling for jobs and fair treatment for America's black population, but his speech went much further than that.

King's style of oratory owed much to his background as a Baptist preacher and his imagery, of a dream in which black and white people lived in harmony and friendship – and where his children "will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character" – was in line with the visionary sermons that many of his listeners had heard in church. The power of his words went far beyond the 17 minutes that his speech took and the 250,000 people gathered on that day, 28 August 1963. They became not only a defining moment of the civil rights movement, but of US history. ▶

DID YOU KNOW?

PUPPY POP

It seems that the Beatles wanted to get their message to more than just their human listeners: the song 'A Day in the Life' on the *Sgt. Pepper's* album contains a tone of such high frequency that it is inaudible to humans, but can be heard by dogs.



MAIN: **The Beatles are seen preparing for *Our World*, a programme broadcast live to 24 countries, at Abbey Road**

LEFT: **The debut of 'All You Need is Love' was accompanied with the lyrics in multiple languages**

"All you need is love"

The Beatles, 1967

The Beatles were at the height of their fame and influence by the 1967 'summer of love'. Pop music had developed into a young people's lifestyle and outlook that their parents, of the wartime generation, found utterly bewildering. The Beatles did not just produce hit records: they put forward a new philosophy, which overturned the older generation's assumptions about behaviour, dress and morality. When their album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* appeared in May, it quickly took on cult status. A month later, the group unveiled a new song, 'All You Need is Love', as part of the first global live television link-up called *Our World*, which was watched by an audience of approximately 400 million.

The song had been purposely written with simple repeated lyrics to appeal to the international viewers, and so summarised the new attractive, easy-to-grasp philosophy in clear terms. As the song itself says, "It's easy". Older heads might point out that life needs a lot more than love, but in 1967 few young people were listening. Pop music has been one of the defining cultural influences that mark the postwar world: it has overcome generational, social, political and cultural barriers with its infectious rhythms and simple messages. While 'All You Need is Love' may have always been an ideal, it has endured.

“That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind”

Neil Armstrong, 1969

That, at any rate, is what Neil Armstrong meant to say when he stepped down from the lunar module onto the surface of the Moon on 20 July 1969. Either he slipped on his words or they were obscured by a bleep in the transmission, because the version heard back on Earth did not have that crucial “a”. It did not seem to matter.

Armstrong was right: it was a giant leap, though at the time no one quite knew in what direction. Space exploration had excited people around the world since the Soviet Union’s Sputnik satellite in 1957 and putting a human being on the Moon had seemed the ultimate prize. Where was all this endeavour to go after that? Science fiction suggested a world of space voyages, but the reality was to be much closer to home. Space technology moved into the world of satellites, first for telecommunications and later for everything from television to meteorology and traffic management. Inevitably, the military potential of space was quickly recognised. The Moon missions opened space up as a further area of operation for the nations of the Earth, so Armstrong was right, even if he got his words wrong.

“There is no such thing as society”

Margaret Thatcher, 1987

The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, Britain’s first woman prime minister, ushered in a revolution. Her immediate aim was to resolve the economic problems into which the country had sunk in the 1970s, which she did by promoting a new philosophy based on free enterprise and the rolling-back of state control.

In an interview for *Women’s Own* magazine, Thatcher outlined her belief that, ultimately, it is not for the government to resolve people’s problems; individuals and families must look after themselves and their neighbours. In that sense, she said, “There is no such thing as society”.

The phrase provoked a storm of controversy. Supporters applauded her emphasis on individuals, while opponents denounced what they saw as her uncaring attitude towards the Welfare State, which many regarded as the most significant change in 20th-century British society. The phrase encapsulated two completely different political philosophies: a belief in the power of the state as a force for good or as an enervating drain on the people’s energies.

“Human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights”

Hillary Rodham Clinton, 1995

The feminist movement had used a shorter version of this phrase since the 1980s, but it entered the mainstream when Hillary Clinton, the First Lady as wife of US President Bill Clinton, spoke at a United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

The transformation of the position of women in society was one of the most striking changes to took place in the 20th century. The century had begun with the celebrated campaign for women to have the right to vote, and by the end feminism had developed as a movement and philosophy that sought to transform human society along the lines of equality. Clinton was an apt figure to give voice to the aim.

She was a lawyer who, in 1974, had been part of the Watergate investigation team that brought down President Richard Nixon. But her husband’s presidency meant that she had to perform an essentially ceremonial role. She could support Bill in his duties, but could she hold office herself?

As long as women’s rights continued to be regarded as a category on their own, it seemed, women would never be accepted as equals – hence her impassioned iteration that women’s rights are not just rights for women: they have always been basic human rights.

DR SEÁN LANG is a historian, author, broadcaster and playwright. He has written several titles in the *For Dummies* series and is senior lecturer in history at Anglia Ruskin University

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Which of these 10 quotations defines the 20th century for you? Cast your vote at *historyextra.com/tenquotes*

What other quotes do you think impacted the 20th century? Email us at *haveyoursay@historyrevealed.com*

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WHAT IF... THE WHITE SHIP HADN'T SUNK?

Jonny Wilkes talks to historian and author **Dr Catherine Hanley** about how one tragic accident at sea had far-reaching consequences for the monarchy and royal dynasties of the 12th century and beyond

The Anarchy: nearly two decades of civil war in England, which, as the name suggests, is still remembered as a period of total lawlessness and disorder. Following the death of Henry I in 1135, two rival relatives fought for the throne, his daughter Matilda on one side and his nephew Stephen of Blois on the other. This succession crisis, years of war and an England in chaos had all rippled out from the sinking of a single ship in the Channel many years earlier.

On the night of 25 November 1120, the *White Ship* set sail from Barfleur on the coast of Normandy for England. On board were important figures in Anglo-Norman society, led by William Adelin, Henry I 's only son and heir. The passengers and crew had been drinking heavily, getting so drunk that, according to one chronicle, they had laughed at and shooed away the priests trying to bless the voyage. A mile out from shore, the ship struck a rock and sank in a matter of minutes. Nearly everybody drowned, including the teen prince.

Henry broke down in despair at the news. Robbed of his heir, he spent his remaining 15 years trying to sire another son, unsuccessfully, and then trying to ensure his barons' acceptance of his daughter Matilda as queen, again unsuccessfully, as it turned out. But what if the *White Ship* never sank and William had lived on? "Henry would have been safe in the knowledge that he had a male heir. Indeed, he would have expected William to go on to have children of his own, making the Crown's position even more comfortable," says medieval historian Dr Catherine Hanley, author of *Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior* (Yale University Press, 2019).

Of course, the peaceful ascension of William after the death of his father would have meant no Anarchy in England. "Battles, skirmishes and sieges would not have taken place, and people would have been able to go about their lives and business in greater peace and security," says Hanley. "More taxes would have been paid – during the Anarchy, some areas were so devastated that their entries simply said 'waste' – and so the Crown would have enjoyed greater prosperity."

DID YOU KNOW?

LUCKY ESCAPE

Stephen of Blois – who seized the throne following the death of Henry I in 1135 and ruled England until 1154 – had meant to sail on the *White Ship* but got off before the doomed voyage began and stayed ashore because he was feeling unwell.

A STABLE KINGDOM

Although, the difference that may have been seen in Normandy is more difficult to predict, Hanley claims, as it would have depended on Henry I's nephews, brothers Stephen and Theobold. The former had seized his opportunity in 1135 by rushing across the English Channel and taking the throne. With William alive and secure, however, Stephen may have remained "the non-entity he was always destined to be, content with his position as Count of Boulogne". More likely the "notoriously fickle" Theobold could have sided with the King of France against England.

The impact of this on the reign of (what would have been) William III, also Duke of Normandy, is similarly tricky to gauge as there is no knowing what kind of king he would have ended up being. William was 17 when he died on the *White Ship*, so his reputation for being immature and irresponsible could have changed as he grew. By 1135, he would have been in his early 30s and a different man from the teenager he

IN CONTEXT

When the *White Ship* sank off the Normandy coast on the night of 25 November 1120, all but one of the roughly 300 people on board perished. Among the dead was 17-year-old William Adelin, son and heir of Henry I of England; his death left the king with no legitimate male offspring. A new marriage failed to produce one, so he looked to his daughter, Matilda, to rule after him. Instead, Henry's death on 1 December 1135 sparked a succession crisis.

Stephen of Blois, grandson of William the Conqueror, had himself crowned on 22 December and ruled for almost four years before his cousin Matilda invaded to win her throne. A protracted civil war broke out, which lasted 18 years with neither side gaining the advantage.

In 1153, the Treaty of Winchester decreed that Stephen would remain king, but Matilda's son would succeed; on Stephen's death the following year, the Plantagenet dynasty began under Henry II.

King Stephen's wife begs Empress Matilda for her husband's release after he was briefly captured in 1141

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1

had been in 1120 – the type of teenager who shared barrels of wine with a ship's crew right before they began a night-time voyage.

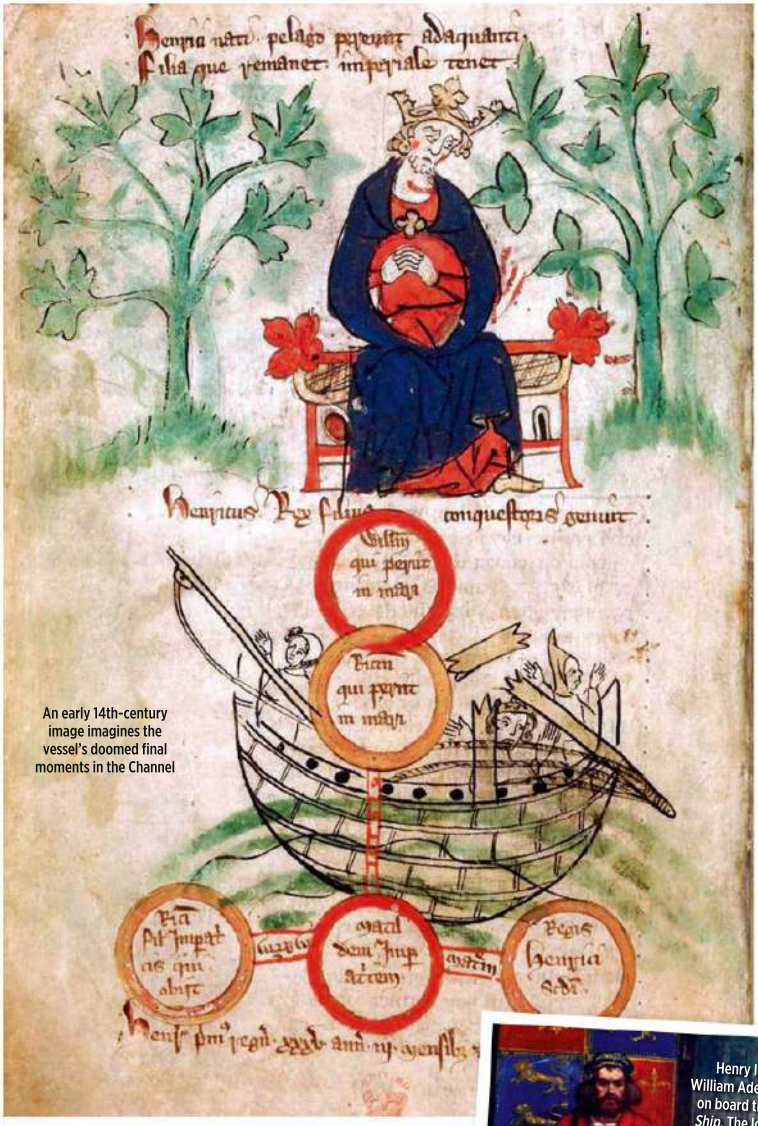
"We should also remember that William was not the only person who drowned. The young heirs to various earldoms would have also survived, and so there would have been a great deal more stability in terms of inheritances in England as William grew up," says Hanley. The king may have had a wealth of advisers and courtiers, such as his illegitimate brother, Richard Fitzroy, who perished in the sinking, too. "Richard had already proven himself to be one of Henry I's right-hand men. If William had survived and had Richard, along with their half-brother Robert, to advise him, he would have been in good hands."

DYNASTIC CHANGE

There is a hugely significant change to consider had there been a secure reign for William III, according to Hanley. "I'm almost 100 per cent certain that the Angevin empire – England, Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Aquitaine – would never have come into being. It was formed because Henry I's daughter Matilda married her second husband Geoffrey of Anjou, and they produced a son who regained the English throne as Henry II [the first of the Angevin kings]."

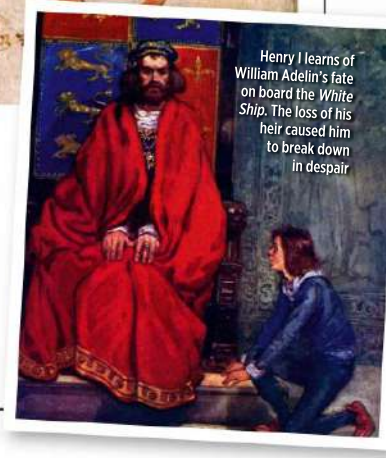
This match only came about in the aftermath of the *White Ship* sinking. William was already married to Matilda of Anjou, Geoffrey's sister, so had he lived then there would have been no reason for Henry I to form another alliance with Anjou using his daughter. Matilda, without the pressure coming from the king, would never have gone through with that marriage anyway. Her first husband had been the Holy Roman Emperor – which is why she is sometimes referred to as Empress Matilda – and she regarded Geoffrey as a mere count and below her standing.

No marriage to Geoffrey, no Henry II. Hanley concludes with the far-reaching potential implications of this: "So there would have been no Angevin empire, no Plantagenets on the English throne, and perhaps no later Wars of the Roses or Tudors. That one night in November 1120 changed it all."



An early 14th-century image imagines the vessel's doomed final moments in the Channel

"THE PASSENGERS AND CREW HAD BEEN GETTING SO DRUNK THEY SHOOED AWAY THE PRIESTS TRYING TO BLESS THE VOYAGE"



Henry I learns of William Adelin's fate on board the *White Ship*. The loss of his heir caused him to break down in despair

LISTEN

History Extra Charles Spencer speaks to Dan Jones about the *White Ship* disaster on the HistoryExtra podcast: *historyextra.com/white-ship-podcast*

NEXT MONTH

What if... Edward VIII hadn't abdicated the throne?

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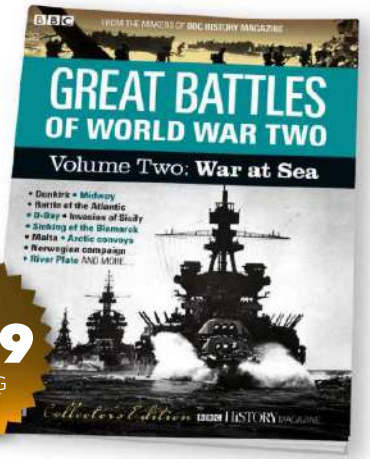
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GETTY IMAGES

156

One of the estimates for the number of children fathered by ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II: 96 sons and 60 daughters. A more conservative figure is just over 100.

EVOLVE OR LIE
A model of the so-called 'Piltdown Man' and a replica of its skull, which was later found to be a human cranium paired with an orangutan's jaw

MONKEY BUSINESS
Alleged fraudster Charles Dawson (*left, digging*) carries out further excavations at Piltdown, c1913

Who was the Piltdown Man?

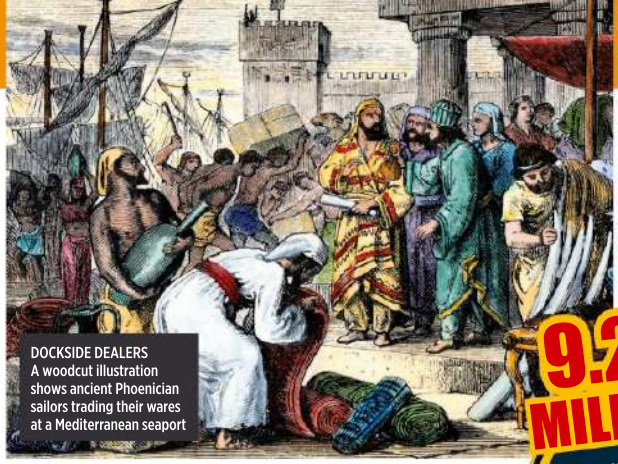
SHORT ANSWER An evolutionary marvel. No wait, actually one of the greatest hoaxes in the history of science

LONG ANSWER The discovery of the fossilised remains of *Eoanthropus dawsoni* in 1910–12 was heralded as proof of the evolutionary link between apes and humans. English lawyer and amateur archaeologist Charles Dawson made the find on Piltdown Common near Lewes, East Sussex, and they were announced as a previously unknown species of hominin from 500,000 years ago.

The credibility of the so-called Piltdown Man went unchallenged for over four decades. Only in 1953 was the truth revealed: it was a human skull from medieval times with an orangutan jaw and teeth (plus one tooth perhaps belonging to a chimpanzee), all stained to make them look older.

The exposure of the hoax helped scientists work out the true sequence of human evolution – the Piltdown Man had long been a thorn in the side of REAL fossil research around the world – yet the identity of the forger remains a mystery to this day. It could have been Dawson, keen to gain entrance into the Royal Society, or French priest and palaeontologist at the dig site, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has even been suspected as he lived near Piltdown. Perhaps he thought the hoax would be a match for his literary creation, Sherlock Holmes.

ALAMY X3



DOCKSIDE DEALERS
A woodcut illustration shows ancient Phoenician sailors trading their wares at a Mediterranean seaport

9.27 MILLION

The approximate size, in square miles, of the Mongol empire at its height, the largest contiguous land empire in history.

Did the Phoenicians have an empire?

SHORT ANSWER They were merchants rather than conquerors, but when it came to trade they ruled the waves

LONG ANSWER The Phoenicians were master maritime merchants famed far and wide. Originating from modern-day Lebanon, Syria and northern Israel, they emerged around 3000 BC and flourished c1500 to 300 BC by building trade networks across the Mediterranean and colonies on the coasts of Europe and North Africa. Think the likes of Carthage.

As well as goods – linen, wine, spices, wood, glass, salt and slaves – the Phoenicians spread their alphabet, which became something of a standardised tool in international commerce and an undoubted inspiration for the Greek alphabet. Yet despite their reach, they never had an empire. They didn't even have a single civilisation with a uniform language or shared cultural heritage.

Rather, the Phoenicians were a loose confederation of city states, such as Byblos, Tyre, Sidon and Arwad, which had to deal with the big powers like Egypt or Persia, while maintaining a degree of autonomy thanks to their unrivalled reputation.

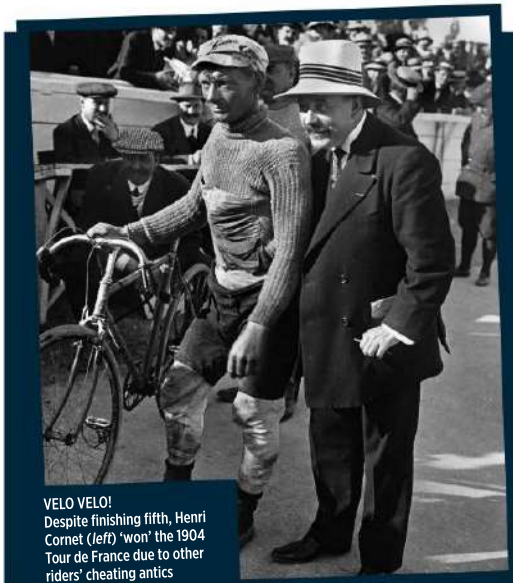
Why is it called Peach Melba?

SHORT ANSWER Singers tend to get a bunch of flowers after a performance. Dame Nellie got a dessert

LONG ANSWER The French chef Auguste Escoffier, the so-called king of chefs and chef of kings, was given tickets to see Nellie Melba, the celebrated Australian soprano, at Covent Garden in 1893. As a thank you, he whipped up a new dessert of peaches and vanilla ice cream for the singer when she dined at the Savoy Hotel, presented on a silver dish on top of an ice swan. This was in honour of the opera he had seen Nellie perform in, which featured a swan-shaped boat.

His hit after-dinner treat didn't emerge fully formed. It took Escoffier a further eight years before he had the brainwave of adding raspberry sauce to the recipe. That was when he also dubbed the dessert Peach Melba.

SWEET SINGER
As well as being a doyenne of opera, Nellie Melba is also known for her link to a fruity French dessert



VELO VELO!
Despite finishing fifth, Henri Cornet (*left*) 'won' the 1904 Tour de France due to other riders' cheating antics

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X4

When was the 'last' Tour de France?

SHORT ANSWER The world's most prestigious cycling race looked to have crashed before it even got into gear

LONG ANSWER This is not a trick question. Of course, the Tour de France is alive and well – as long as sign-waving spectators stay out of the way. The future seemed bleak, however, after the second edition. The 1904 tour was such a farce that organiser Henri Desgrange declared it would be the "last" as the race had been blighted by cheating, with riders taking shortcuts, following cars or hitching a lift on passing trains.

The crowds made matters worse, pelting racers with stones, blocking roads and scattering nails and glass to puncture tyres. Two racers were attacked by masked men, while another confrontation got so out of hand that officials fired a gun into the air. In the end, a dozen racers were disqualified, including the winner, Maurice Garin.

Young Frenchman Henri Cornet, who originally finished all the way back in fifth place, was elevated to champion four months later. Desgrange had to be convinced to give the race another chance, with much-changed rules.

Why did Napoleon always have one hand in his shirt?

SHORT ANSWER He didn't in real life; the distinctive look was only common on canvas

LONG ANSWER Ask a group of people to describe Napoleon Bonaparte's physical appearance and chances are the same two things will come up: he was incredibly short, and he always kept one hand tucked inside his shirt.

First off, he wasn't actually that tiny – his height of five feet seven inches was about average for a man at the time. Secondly, the hand-in-shirt pose was not specific to the Emperor of France. It certainly featured in numerous portraits and became so associated with him that theories have been concocted to explain it. His hand had been deformed in battle, goes one baseless claim, while another says he was constantly pressing on his stomach to alleviate chronic pain, which makes more sense as Napoleon is thought to have succumbed, in 1821, to stomach cancer.

But the truth is that the pose was a mainstay of portraiture in the 18th and 19th centuries. Concealing a hand became a symbol of statesmanlike nobility, restraint, and, according to the 1737 book on etiquette *The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour* by François Nivelon, "manly boldness". Napoleon, who never sported the look in real life, believed it fitted his image as powerful yet modestly hard-working and grasped it with both hands. Sorry, one hand.

STRIKE A POSE Jacques-Louis David's iconic 1812 portrait of the French emperor in his office at the Tuileries, Paris

DID YOU KNOW?

LISZT'S LOCK LIES
At the height of his 19th-century fame, Hungarian composer Franz Liszt received so many fan requests for locks of his hair that he bought a dog, specifically for the purpose of using its fur to satisfy the demand.

PAWN STARS
In one medieval version of chess, all eight pawns had their own name: gambler, city guard, innkeeper, doctor, merchant, weaver, blacksmith and farmer. Despite their fancy titles, the pawns' function in the game did not change.

SPACE MONKEY
In 1959, a squirrel monkey named Miss Baker was one of the first animals to be launched into space by the US and returned safely. Her grave in Alabama – where she lived until her death in 1984 – can often be seen topped with bananas.

HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW
The town of Pascagoula, Mississippi, was hit by a bizarre crime wave in 1942, when an unidentified man broke into houses at night and cut the hair of young girls. The 'phantom barber' was never caught.

What was episkyros?

SHORT ANSWER An ancient Greek form of football, dodgeball and rugby rolled into one

LONG ANSWER The sports-loving ancient Greeks had a proto-organised team game called *episkyros*, which could be described as football mixed with dodgeball with Spartan violence thrown in. Two teams of 12 or 14 players faced off either side of a line down the middle of the playing area and a line behind each of them. The aim was to hit a ball using hands and feet back and forth to force an opponent past their line. Since the Spartans enjoyed *episkyros* the most, you know it was a contact sport. They used brute force to essentially rugby tackle other teams and score.

FIGHTING TO WIN Games of *episkyros* (literally 'common ball') could become exceptionally violent

When were bananas first sold in Britain?

SHORT ANSWER A botanist became a fruit-selling entrepreneur in 1633

LONG ANSWER On 10 April 1633, an exotic new product hit the streets of London. Thomas Johnson, 'father of British field botany', advertised what are believed to be the first bananas for sale in Britain. "They hang with their heads down, but if you turn them up, they look like a boat," was how he described them. "The husk is easily removed. The pulp is white, soft and tender and ate somewhat like a musk melon." It is thought the fruit came from Bermuda, leading one to wonder how appealing they looked by the time they reached Johnson's shop window.

BRRRING IT ON
A 16th-century image depicts the infamously icy clash fought on Lake Peipus in 1242

75

The total number of rounds in the final US bare-knuckle boxing championship fight in 1889. Despite vomiting in the 44th round, John Sullivan eventually defeated Jake Kilrain.

What was the 'Battle on the Ice'?

SHORT ANSWER In 1242, a crusade got an icy reception

LONG ANSWER When an army of Teutonic Knights on crusade to Christianise the Baltic region came up against the Novgorod Republic, it wasn't on a battlefield. As the name suggests, the forces collided on 5 April 1242 on a frozen lake. The ice of Lake Peipus, on the border of modern-day Estonia and Russia, stayed strong over hours of fighting before the knights were forced back by the soldiers of Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod. The crusaders then got cold feet about their entire campaign and withdrew.

In 1938, the Battle on the Ice and Nevsky became the subjects of a hagiographic historical film by cinema pioneer Sergei Eisenstein. A propaganda piece comparing the knights to Nazi Germany, it came to define how the battle has been remembered – even the wrong and glorified bits, such as how many knights drowned when the weight of their armour caused the ice to crack.

When was 'land' dropped from the Hollywood sign?

SHORT ANSWER In 1949, a billboard became a welcome sign for the movie business

LONG ANSWER A symbol of moviemaking glitz and glamour, the Hollywood sign was first a marketing gimmick with a slightly longer name. Real estate mogul Harry Chandler erected Hollywoodland on Mount Lee in 1923 to advertise his housing development in Los Angeles. The effect didn't last as the 13 letters, 13.1 metres high and held up by telephone poles, pipes, scaffolding and wires, fell into disrepair. For a time in the 1940s, the sign read 'ollywoodland' after the H was knocked over when caretaker Albert Kothe drove into it while drunk.

That same decade, ownership passed to the city and debate raged whether the whole thing should be ripped down. Eventually, an agreement was reached in 1949 to repair the letters as long as 'land' was ditched and it henceforth represented the movie business instead.

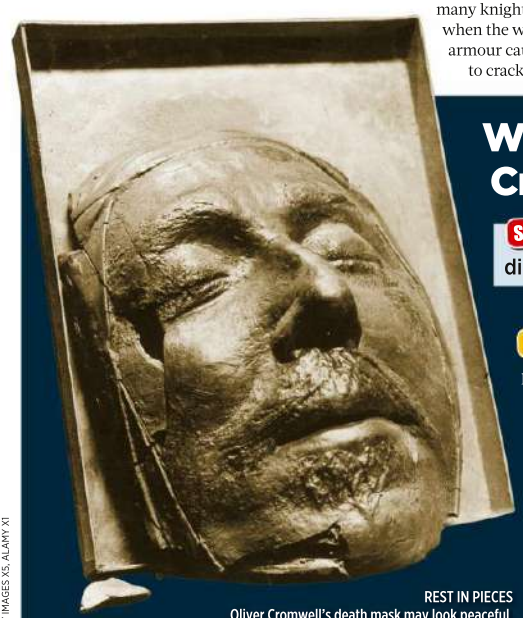
SIGN OF THE TIMES
Actor Les Tremayne and his wife, Eileen, pose in front of the landmark in 1940, nine years before its revamp

What happened to Oliver Cromwell's body?

SHORT ANSWER The fact that he had died two years earlier didn't stop his enemies from wreaking their revenge

LONG ANSWER Oliver Cromwell commanded the parliamentarian armies in the Civil Wars, was a signatory on King Charles I's death warrant, and ruled England, Scotland and Ireland as Lord Protector. But there was no resting in peace after his death from suspected septicaemia in 1658. Initially buried in a grand ceremony at Westminster Abbey, Cromwell would be dug up again following the restoration of the monarchy two years later and subjected to a posthumous execution, with his body hanged at Tyburn and thrown in a pit. His head, however – which, don't forget, had already been rotting in the ground – was placed on a spike and put on display outside Westminster Hall for at least 24 years.

When removed, the head passed around a number of private owners, including one who proudly displayed it on his mantelpiece. It was finally decided to give Cromwell's cranium a second burial, this time at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge – but not until 1960.



REST IN PIECES
Oliver Cromwell's death mask may look peaceful, but his remains were certainly not treated with care

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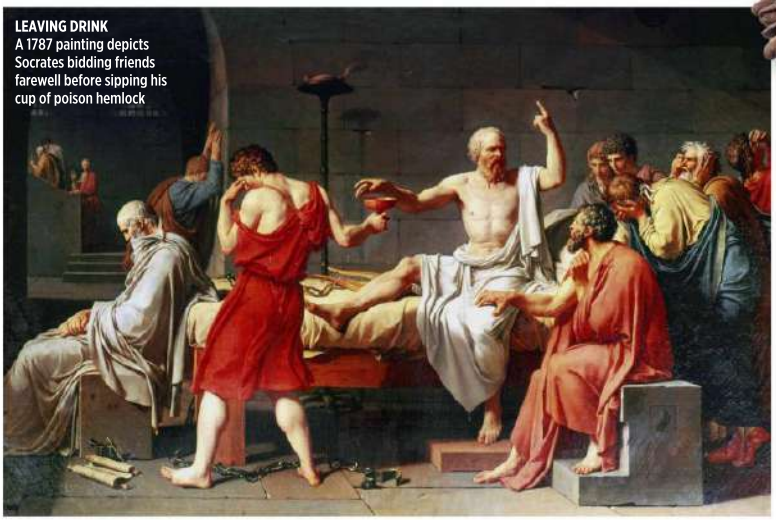

LEAVING DRINK
A 1787 painting depicts Socrates bidding friends farewell before sipping his cup of poison hemlock

What was Socrates tried for?

SHORT ANSWER His world-changing philosophies went against the gods and corrupted his pupils, apparently

LONG ANSWER The ancient Greek philosopher may have been the greatest intellect of his age and the father of western thought, who changed the way we approach notions of knowledge, virtue and preconception, but he was the guy always, ALWAYS, asking why. Anyone who has spent time looking after a toddler knows that quickly gets irritating, so you know he got on the wrong side of people.

And so he did, although more for political reasons. His native Athens at the turn of the fourth century BC was in chaos, having seen Sparta seize the city-state and impose an oppressive rule by the Thirty Tyrants, only to be overthrown and democracy restored. In that unstable climate, people looked for someone to turn against and they chose Socrates, who had gained a loyal following with his teachings, but had made friends with the wrong people, been critical of Athenian democracy in the past, and voiced some scandalous views on religion.

In 399 BC, Socrates was tried for "impiety" and "corrupting the young". Despite an eloquent defence, the jury of 500 male Athenians sentenced him to death by a majority of 60 and he carried out his own execution by drinking a cup of liquid made from the poisonous hemlock plant.

What did a posser do?

SHORT ANSWER The handy tool was a plunger for your clothes and linen

LONG ANSWER Were it not for modern washing machines, most people would still be familiar with the posser. In a time when laundry had to be done by hand by soaking, beating and rinsing, the posser made the process a bit more posser-ble. It looked a lot like a plunger: a copper dome or cone at the bottom with a wooden handle, used to pound the laundry in a tub. Holes in the metal allowed the water to swirl around or create a suction effect to get everything nice and clean, or as clean as could be expected for the 19th century.

TAKING THE PLUNGE
An 1873 illustration shows a south Wales coal mining family using a posser to wash their clothes

Why did Frederick the Great hire 'coffee sniffers'?

SHORT ANSWER Prussia had a workforce of 400 men who had to wake up and smell the coffee, literally

LONG ANSWER While being a 'coffee sniffer' may sound like a dream job to some, they were actually informants in the Kingdom of Prussia during the 1780s. Frederick the Great raised a luxury on the beloved beans to 150 per cent of the sale price, decreeing that the Prussian love of coffee was sending too much money abroad and more should be done to support domestic producers. To that end, Frederick – a coffee addict, by the way – encouraged his subjects to drink bucketloads of another beverage: beer.

Coffee roasting, meanwhile, would predominantly be a state-only business, so the sniffers walked around towns to smell out any illegal activity involving smuggled beans. Around 400 injured or disabled war veterans were hired, paraded around in uniform and were empowered to search people and houses. Anyone they caught was issued with hefty fines, making coffee sniffers akin to a secret police. The KGBean, perhaps?

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ONE TO WATCH

Matt Damon fights for justice – and his life – in the latest cinematic offering by director Ridley Scott

Last man standing

The Last Duel / In cinemas from Friday 15 October

Jodie Comer plays Marguerite de Thibouville, whose accusation of rape could see her burned at the stake

In 1977, *The Duellists*, a story of a bitter extended feud between two French Hussar officers set during the Napoleonic Wars, won the Best Debut Film award at the Cannes festival. The glittering feature career of director Ridley Scott (*Alien*, *Gladiator*), who had begun working in TV and advertising, was underway.

Now in his 80s, Scott shows few signs of slowing down and spent part of 2020 filming another tale of two men squaring up to each other, *The Last Duel*. Based on a 2004 book by Eric Jager, a professor of medieval literature, it tells the story of the last officially recognised judicial duel fought in France, in 1386.

It was fought between Norman knight Jean de Carrouges and squire Jacques Le Gris, and came about after Carrouges's wife, Marguerite de Thibouville, accused Le Gris of raping her. Carrouges, worried that he wouldn't get a fair legal hearing because Le Gris was a favourite of the powerful Count Pierre d'Alençon, successfully appealed to King Charles VI for the chance to settle the case via trial by combat.

It was the riskiest of gambits. This was a brutal fight to the death with the winner declared innocent in the eyes of God. It also put Thibouville's life on the line, because she stood to be burnt at the stake for perjury if her husband lost.

Scripted by Nicole Holofcener and two of the film's stars, Ben Affleck (d'Alençon) and Matt Damon (Carrouges), this is a historical drama that gains further star power from the presence of Adam Driver (*BlacKkKlansman*) as Le Gris and Jodie Comer (*Killing Eve*) as Marguerite de Thibouville. Expect a film that's spectacular, visceral (remember the fight scenes in *Gladiator*), and timely in the way it explores questions of who is believed when those in power are challenged.

ALAMY X2

MAIN AND INSET: **The story of the World War II Black Panthers will be told through dramatic reconstructions**

Battling for recognition

The Black Panthers of WWII / Yesterday, October

It's one of the fascinating paradoxes of World War II that, while it mobilised its society to fight totalitarianism, much of the US was divided along racial lines. In the American South, where the Jim Crow laws were still in force, society was segregated until the Civil Rights era.

There was wider institutional racism across national institutions, too. It was not until July 1948 that President Harry S Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which abolished discrimination "on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin" in the US armed forces.

And yet many black troops fought with distinction during World War II, such as the men of the 761st Tank Battalion, aka the Black Panthers. The 761st was the first African-American armoured unit to enter combat, after landing at Omaha Beach, Normandy, in October 1944.

"I have nothing but the best in my army. I don't care what colour you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sonsofbitches," General George S Patton, commander of the United States Third Army, told the 761st during a pep talk. Privately, however, he harboured doubts over whether the unit would be effective. He wasn't alone in these attitudes at a time when many senior officers were reluctant to employ black troops in combat.

But as history records, the men of the 761st were more than capable of living up to their motto to "come out fighting", serving with distinction at the battle of the Bulge and enduring more than 180 days of continuous operational deployment. This one-off documentary tells the story of the unit via dramatic reconstructions, plus interviews with veterans and their families.

Family fortunes

Who Do You Think You Are? / BBC One, October

It may have reached its 18th series, but the popular family history programme *WDYTYA?* shows every sign of carrying on for another 18 series.

This year, the seven celebrities journeying into the past are politician turned broadcaster Ed Balls, actor and national treasure Dame Judi Dench, singer-songwriter Pixie Lott, former footballer and TV presenter Alex Scott, YouTuber Joe Sugg, and comedians Josh Widdicombe and Joe Lycett.

So what can we expect from the new series? As we went to press, full billings had yet to be released, but we can definitely expect Judi Dench learning about Shakespearean connections and Danish roots; Alex Scott exploring her Jewish roots and discovering how her great-grandad faced down fascism in London's East End in 1936; and Josh Widdicombe meeting a courtier who had "intimate access" to a royal commode.

©LIKE A SHOT X2, TIM KNIGHT X1, WALL TO WALL X1, GETTY IMAGES X4

In fear and wonder

Nature & Us: A Journey Through Art / BBC Four, October

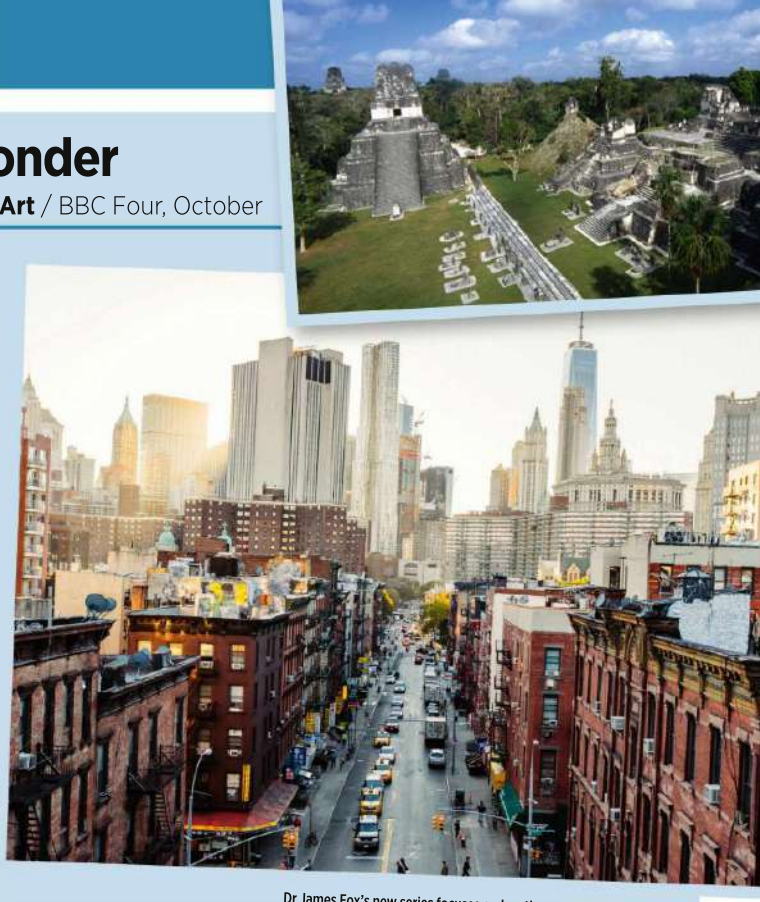
What might art tell us about our relationship with nature down the ages? It's a question at the heart of a new series presented by Cambridge scholar Dr James Fox, who in a major new series also argues that art and culture have much to tell us about our most profound ideas, fears and hopes.

Filmed in locations around the world – ranging from forests to the high-rise streets of New York City – the series takes in cave art, Egyptian sculptures, Ming Dynasty-era Chinese paintings, Japanese gardens and the pyramids of ancient Guatemala. Yet despite the rich variety of objects and architecture on show, including abstract and conceptual art, Fox's thesis is in key respects about how certain ideas and themes recur down the centuries.

In particular, our ancestors, who were as awed by nature as we so often are, asked the same kinds of questions we ask today. Are we a part of nature or somehow distinct from it? Should we aspire to transcend the power of nature or should we learn to live with it?

Helping Fox to grapple with these questions are scientists, historians and writers, who discuss anthropology, philosophy, science and religion – always in an accessible way.

The themes of the show are given an extra urgency by the current environmental crises we face. Could it be, asks Fox, that our inability to reach a collective position on our place in nature has contributed to our current problems? Perhaps it's time we made our minds up – before it's too late.



Dr James Fox's new series focuses on locations such as the ancient pyramids of Guatemala (*top*) and the bustling streets of New York City (*above*)

Journeys to the past

Bettany Hughes' Treasures of the World / All 4, streaming now

Bettany Hughes (*left*) has been seeking out some of the world's greatest treasures – including a Greek island with links to the goddess Artemis (*below*)

If you've been out and about on recent Saturday nights, you may have missed Bettany Hughes' latest series, which dropped into the schedules late in the day but is well worth streaming. Over five episodes, the sun-drenched *Treasures of the World* finds the classicist and historian travelling to, among other destinations, Greece, Malta and Turkey as she sees recent archaeological discoveries and gains access to historical locations usually closed to visitors.

On the sacred Greek island of Delos, for example, Hughes and her team, who formed a 'crew bubble' to enable them to film through the pandemic, stayed the night, a rare privilege. She was thus able to see the full Moon during the summer solstice – a time associated with worship of the Moon goddess Artemis.

In Istanbul, Hughes looks down rather than up as she is invited to visit the Basilica Cistern, a magnificent and ornate water reservoir built by Justinian beneath the city's streets. Here, she walks on the original sixth-century floor, drained of water during restoration work.

Days of future past

Archive on 4: Plastic – The Biography / BBC Radio 4, Saturday 23 October

Like a much feted person once tipped for greatness until caught in a compromising position, plastic has over the past century very publicly fallen from grace. A material that once represented modernity is now more often associated with waste, pollution and footage of choked wildlife.

Journalist and broadcaster Laura Barton tells the story of plastic as if it were itself an ill-fated politician, someone at the centre of their own narrative. The show mixes archive audio with the words of actors offering commentary in the guise of colleagues, friends and former lovers.

The Saka buried their dead in mounds alongside their horses and golden grave goods

MUST SEE

EXHIBITION

Gold of the Great Steppe

FREE ENTRY Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, until 30 January, *steppe-gold.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk*

The Saka culture flourished around 2,500 years ago in modern-day Kazakhstan, but outside of Central Asia the Saka remain relatively unknown. A major exhibition hopes to change that by bringing, for the first time, hundreds of artefacts to the UK from three burial complexes.

The Saka people lived in the dry grassy plains of the Eurasian Steppe, and filled the landscape with burial mounds for their dead. Excavations in recent years have unearthed evidence of a highly advanced nomadic society of fierce warriors and skilled craftspeople, known for their gold work.

One of the highlights of the exhibition includes a reconstruction of a burial for a teenage Saka archer. No older than 18, he was buried with more than 15,000 golden objects. This is one of the few Saka burials found intact and not targeted by looters, as it was hidden by a rockfall.

Elite members of Saka society were buried in mounds alongside their horses, as well as a host of exquisite golden grave goods, from jewellery and weapons to animal figurines and crockery.

The University of Cambridge has been working on the exhibition alongside the East Kazakhstan Regional Museum of Local History, and as 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is a fitting tribute. It's hoped that this exhibition will help historians uncover more about the history and rites of the Saka.

A selection of golden Saka crafts, including a dagger sheath, a stag and a pear-shaped plaque, all with semi-precious stones

YEVGENIY DOMSHEV X1, FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM X3, MUSEUM OF LONDON X2, GETTY IMAGES X1, BENAKI MUSEUM ATHENS X1, ALAMY X2

So many ships arrived in the capital that the Port of London Authority had its own police force

EXHIBITION

London: Port City

FREE ENTRY Museum of London Docklands, opens on 22 October, *museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands*

When the Romans picked the location of Londinium, it was because of its strategic position on the Thames. The river and port built on it have played a key role in London's history for generations, and during the 18th and 19th centuries was one of the busiest ports in the world; a hub of the British empire. The Museum of London Docklands' new exhibition explores the city's port in its heyday over the last 200 years and how it has become so important worldwide. From its role in the transatlantic slave trade through to its influence on London's street names and pubs, its far-reaching influence will be uncovered through features such as an interactive timeline of the port's key moments, while a live shipping tracker will show just how busy the Thames remains today. Entry is free, but tickets must be booked in advance.

EXHIBITION

Inspiring Walter Scott

FREE ENTRY National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, until 9 January, *nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland*

To commemorate the birth of one of Scotland's most famous sons, Sir Walter Scott (*pictured right*), an exhibition has been created full of historic objects that inspired him and his writing. There's the Jacobite glasses used to toast the exiled Stuart heirs, as well as a sporran clasp containing concealed pistols, thought to have been the model for that worn by Rob Roy in Scott's story of the same name. Through his many novels, from his breakout hit *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* to *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, Scott helped shape how Scotland was viewed by the world as he celebrated his home's history and iconic landscapes.

Scott had access to many historical objects, such as this Spanish-style helmet

EXHIBITION

Ancient Greeks: Science and Wisdom

FREE ENTRY Science Museum, London, opens on 17 November, *sciencemuseum.org.uk*

Ancient Greece is, among other things, remembered for its wealth of philosophers, scientists and great thinkers. They were fascinated with how the universe worked, as we still are today, and looked for logical and scientific explanations behind the natural world. From studying the stars to the wealth of creatures in the seas, the ancient Greeks looked to understand the meaning of everything and turned to the gods for inspiration.

Artwork and artefacts, some brought together in the UK for the first time, will explore how curiosity and investigation were key to how the ancient Greeks saw and thought about the world. Among the highlights of the free exhibition are fish plates adorned with marine animals, and a celestial globe.

A gold headdress adorned with the image of Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom

EXHIBITION

Elizabeth and Mary: Royal Cousins, Rival Queens

PAID ENTRY British Library, London, opens on 8 October, *bl.uk*

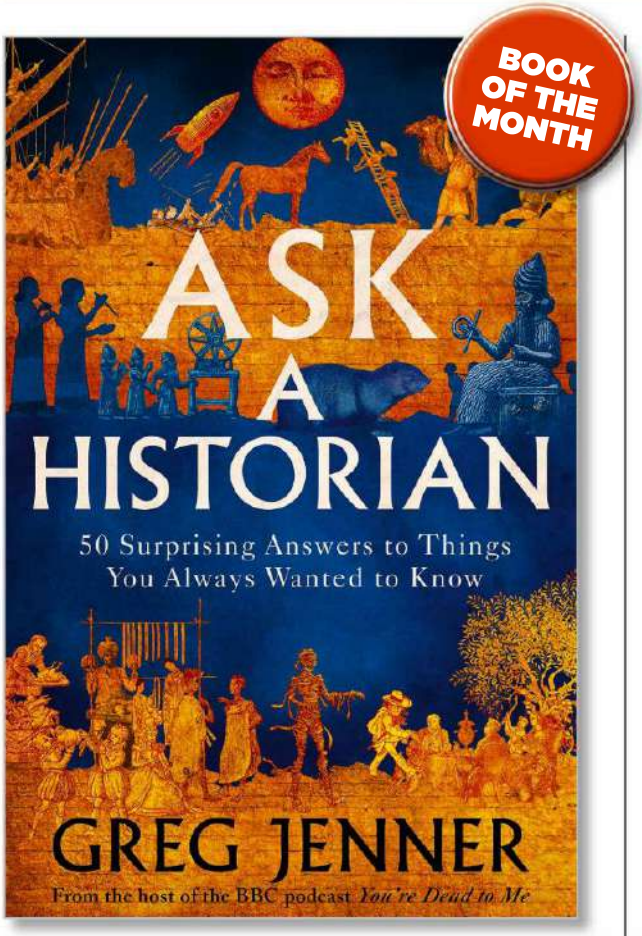
Though they are never thought to have met, the relationship and destinies of cousins Elizabeth I of England and Mary, Queen of Scots, were forever intertwined. This exhibition will send visitors back to a dangerous time of espionage, treachery and religious turmoil as the two queens navigated a man's world. Selections from the British Library's collection will reveal Elizabeth's network of spies who ultimately led to Mary's downfall, as well as hear from eyewitnesses to the Scottish queen's final moments.

Treasures on show include the papal bull that excommunicated Elizabeth, Mary's plea for freedom, and the 'heart and stomach of a king' speech Elizabeth gave at Tilbury in 1588. Tickets should be booked in advance.

Correspondence between the neighbouring queens swiftly turned from familial affection to suspicion and paranoia

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS


BOOK OF THE MONTH
ASK A HISTORIAN
50 Surprising Answers to Things You Always Wanted to Know
GREG JENNER
From the host of the BBC podcast You're Dead to Me

Ask a Historian: 50 Surprising Answers to Things You Always Wanted to Know

By Greg Jenner
W&N, £16.99, hardback, 352 pages

Author and broadcaster Greg Jenner returns with this collection of 50 pressing historical queries posed by members of the public. When was the first Monday? How do we know what our forebears' accents sounded like? And just how accurate was *The Flintstones*? As those examples suggest, it's a lively selection, spanning a diverse array of subjects and periods. The detailed answers are similarly spirited, too, offering a great way into some of history's biggest themes and concepts.

The Last Witches of England: A Tragedy of Sorcery and Superstition

By John Callow
Bloomsbury, £25, hardback, 304 pages

Temperance Lloyd, Susanna Edwards, Mary Trembles: those are the names of the three women hanged for being 'witches' in Devon in 1682, often suggested to be the final people to be executed in England for the alleged offence. Dispelling the fog of rumour and superstition that often surrounds such cases, this book instead explores their real experiences, their personalities, and the community that they called home – and which would eventually turn against them. It's vividly told, detailed, and extremely moving.

The Tale of the Tailor and the Three Dead Kings

By Dan Jones
Head of Zeus, £9.99, hardback, 96 pages

Put another log on the hearth (or its nearest 21st-century equivalent) and settle in for Dan Jones' eerie, evocative retelling of a medieval ghost story. A tailor is making his way home along a gloomy country lane when he is suddenly assailed by an eldritch, shapeshifting apparition – a fiery raven, a vile hound, a long-dead king. First recorded by an unknown monk in the 15th century, and transcribed from Latin a century ago, this is first-rate historical Halloween fare.

The 1619 Project: Born on the Water

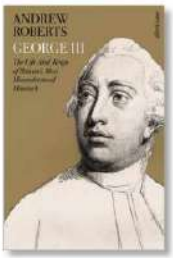
By Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson
Kokila, £13.99, hardback, 48 pages

This lyrical, illustrated look at the experiences and legacy of the slave trade offers a great way of introducing younger readers to what can be a difficult and complex subject. As part of *The New York Times*' ongoing 1619 Project, which aims to place slavery at the heart of the United States' national narrative, it's understandably American in focus. Yet, thanks to its emphasis on individual stories and its beautifully rendered artwork, it promises to have a much broader appeal.

Hidden Hands: The Lives of Manuscripts and their Makers

By Mary Wellesley
Riverrun, £25, hardback, 368 pages

A manuscript, the introduction to this fascinating new book argues, is like a beautiful watch: elegantly crafted and startlingly intricate. But what do we know about the artists and artisans, scribes and scholars responsible for this crafting? Mary Wellesley embarks on a historical quest to find out, bringing some of these people and the records they created vibrantly to life – and highlighting the unsung figures who have helped preserve these rare treasures across the centuries.



George III: The Life and Reign of Britain's Most Misunderstood Monarch

By Andrew Roberts
Allen Lane, £35, hardback, 800 pages

Perhaps the most memorable recent portrayal of George III is as a preening, malicious tyrant in hit musical *Hamilton* – but it's far from the first time that the 18th-century British king has been portrayed in a negative light. That's a reputation which Andrew Roberts here sets out to correct, suggesting that the apparent villain of the American Revolution was instead a compassionate, brave figure who weathered political turbulence and bouts of mental ill-health with aplomb.

PODCAST WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of our favourite podcasts from the BBC, HistoryExtra and beyond

Everything You Wanted to Know: Food History

bit.ly/FoodPod100

The latest in HistoryExtra's Everything You Wanted to Know series embarks on a culinary odyssey, as food historian Annie Gray tackles questions on everything from the oldest recipe book to what the Tudors had for breakfast. And if you've ever wondered which historical dishes are ripe for revival, this is the place to find out...

British Scandal: The Profumo Affair

bit.ly/ScandalPod100

Wondery's podcast series exploring scandalous moments in British history returns with a look at the 1963 Profumo Affair, when a Conservative minister's relationship with a young model led to fears that Britain's national security had been compromised. It's a great story, exuberantly told by Alice Levine and Matt Forde.

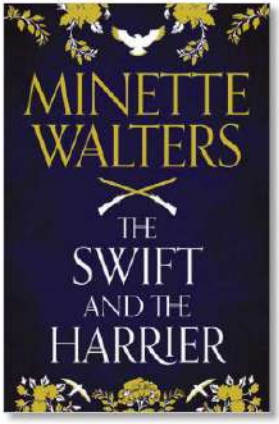
Horrible Histories: The Brontë Sisters

bit.ly/BrontePod100

The Horrible Histories juggernaut rumbles on with this 'Putrid Podcast' spin-off, featuring introductions to child-friendly subjects. In this instalment, Charlotte, Anne and Emily Brontë discuss their literary ambitions, and what it was like being a female writer in the 19th century. Rattus the talking rodent is also on hand to provide historical context.

GETTY IMAGES X2

HISTORICAL FICTION...



The Swift and the Harrier

By Minette Walters
Allen and Unwin, £20, hardback, 4 November 2021

When bloody civil war breaks out between King Charles I and Parliament in 1642, families and communities across England are riven by different allegiances. But Jayne Swift, a Dorset physician from a royalist family, chooses neutrality. Through her dedication to treating the sick and wounded, regardless of belief, Jayne becomes a witness to the brutality of war and the devastation it wreaks. Yet, despite their stark differences, her recurring companion at every event is William Harrier – a man whose past is a mystery, and whose future is uncertain.

Excerpt

The book's protagonist, Jayne Swift, encounters an angry crowd on their way to watch an execution

As the hour for the priests' execution approached, the press of people heading for Gallows Hill grew denser and more impatient. Jayne Swift had expected crowds, but not such a multitude as this. It seemed every Puritan in Dorset had come to gloat at the spectacle of Catholics being hanged, drawn and quartered, because there wasn't a road or street in Dorchester that wasn't thronged with hard-faced men and women, their eyes aglitter in anticipation of papist blood being spilt.

Jayne's only means of making headway against the tide was to stay close to the fronts of houses and try to move forward each time there was a gap, but she was attracting unwelcome attention by doing so. She made the decision to retreat into a doorway and wait for the crush to subside after a man rounded on her angrily for knocking against him. She raised her hands in apology, but the suspicion in his eyes as he studied her gown alarmed her.

She lowered her head submissively to prevent confrontation and sighed with relief when his wife and the flow of humanity carried him on towards Gallows Hill.

FABIO DE PAOLA X1

Q&A
Minette Walters

Minette Walters is one of the world's bestselling crime writers and has sold 25 million copies of her books around the globe. She has won the CWA John Creasey Award and two CWA Gold Daggers, as well as the Edgar Allen Poe Award in the US. She lives in Dorset with her husband.

The Swift and the Harrier is your third historical novel, after mainly writing crime fiction. What made you want to delve into historical fiction, and are there any similarities to crime writing?
My two favourite genres growing up were crime and historical fiction, so both subjects – criminology and history – have always fascinated me. There are many similarities between the two, not least motivation. Why is any victim murdered? Why do governments see war as a solution? In each genre, there's as much grey as there is black and white. To explore and balance such ideas is challenging and exciting.

What is it about the Civil Wars that made you want to set your novel during that time?
They were as important to our history as Henry VIII and the Reformation, yet appear to be less understood. Historians interpret them differently: some see them as religious wars, some as Parliament's attempts to curb the king's power, and some as the people's desire to have their voices heard. Whatever the reason, they caused terrible division throughout the British Isles and resulted in the deaths of 200,000 soldiers and civilians. My own county of Dorset changed hands several times during the period and saw fierce fighting, particularly during the sieges of Lyme Regis and Weymouth; I wanted to write a novel that showed how such turbulence might have affected communities.

What would you like readers to take away from _The Swift and the Harrier_?
That our hard-won democracy is a beautiful thing. That jaw-jaw is always preferable to war-war. That even in conflict, people can find common ground, and that trying to heal division is preferable to making it worse.

Your other historical novels are set during the Black Death. Are there any other periods of history you'd like to write about?
I'm currently fascinated by the aftermath of the Civil Wars. The second half of the 17th century was an extraordinary period, which saw a failed republic, the return of the monarchy, the unwelcome accession of Catholic King James II, his illegitimate nephew's attempt to depose him, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that sent James II into exile and gave us our first constitutional monarchs, William and Mary. All great stuff for an author to get her teeth into!

CROSSWORD

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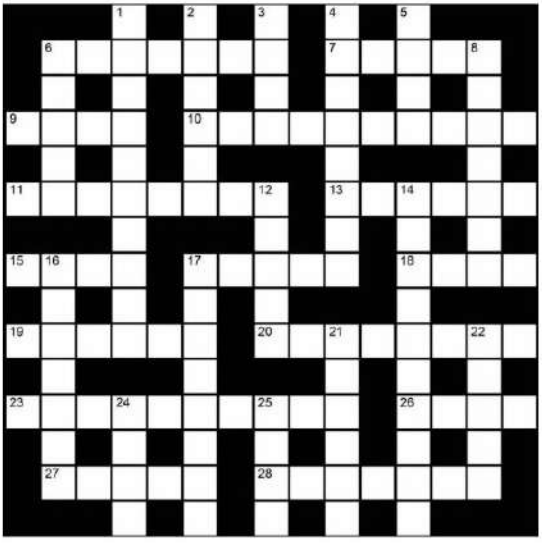
ACROSS

6 *Oedipus Rex* or *King Lear*, for example (7)
7 Berkshire racecourse, founded in 1711 (5)
9 13th-century Persian poet (4)
10 Horatio ___, naval officer created by CS Forester (10)
11 Cyrano de ___ (1619–55), French writer and duellist (8)
13 European capital founded as a Viking settlement in the 10th century (6)
15 Term meaning middle class, popularised by Nancy Mitford (3-1)
17 University city in the north of Italy, where Galileo once taught (5)
18 Icelandic legend (4)
19 John ___ (1703–91), founder of Methodism (6)
20 Country formerly known as Rhodesia, independent since 1980 (8)
23 "Unless... they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a ___ would exist between us" – Neville Chamberlain, 3 September 1939 (5,2,3)
26 Historic spa town in southwest England (4)
27 Thomas Stearns ___ (1888–1965), poet (5)
28 University city in Colorado, settled in 1858 (7)

DOWN

1 Nickname of the boxer Jake LaMotta (1922–2017) (6,4)
2 1880 Christian novel by Lew Wallace (3-3)
3 AJ ___ (1910–89), British philosopher (4)



Set by Richard Smyth

4 Country ruled by the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979 (8)
5 Oread, in Greek myth (4)
6 Northern location, in the geography of antiquity (5)
8/16/22 Jacobite term for a pretender to the throne in exile (3,4,4,3,5)
12 Spanish city captured by Anglo-Dutch forces in 1596 (5)
14 Indian spin bowler (b1946) (6,4)
16 See 8 down
17 ___ Colony, English settlement in the New World, founded in 1620 (8)
21 ___ Garvey (1887–1940), Jamaican activist (6)
22 See 8 down
24 Ronnie or Reggie Kray, perhaps? (4)
25 Beatrice ___ (1858–1943), English socialist and social reformer (4)

CHANCE TO WIN

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HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **BBC History Revealed, November 2021 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **november2021@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk** by noon on **1 December 2021**.

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SOLUTION Nº 98

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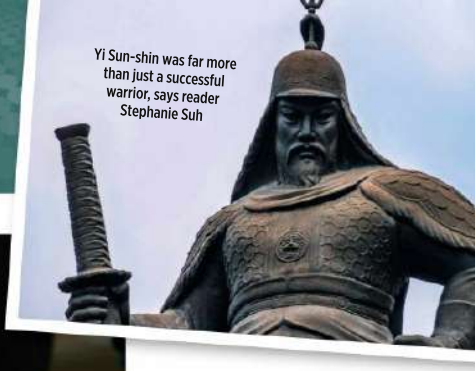
LETTERS



Yi Sun-shin was far more than just a successful warrior, says reader Stephanie Suh

Red-figure art depicting two males embracing – such as the one that appeared in our September issue (*inset, below right*) – often decorated the interior of a *kylix*, a communal cup used at all-male drinking parties

ALTERNATIVE A-GENDER?

According to a caption on page 34 of the Essential Guide to Ancient Greece (September 2021), the image in question (*inset, right*) depicts 'two males embracing'. Does it? It could be argued that the slightness of form, lack of a beard and different headdress depicts a figure that could well be feminine. I have no issue with bringing up an interesting fact about homosexuality in ancient Greece, and its acceptance or otherwise in other ancient cultures. It is an important discussion that deserves to be explored. But ancient paintings, mosaics or scripture should not be reinterpreted to fit a 21st-century view. I would be interested to know what the scholarly take on this is.
Paul Lafferty, by email

Paul Cartledge, AG Leventis Senior Research Fellow, Emeritus AG Leventis Professor of Greek Culture at the University of Cambridge, and the expert advisor for our recent Essential Guide to Ancient Greece responds:

There is absolutely no doubt that this image shows two males embracing. Attic (Athenian) red-figure painters of c500 BC knew perfectly well how to depict naked females and indicated their gender by the distinctive shape and size of their breasts. The couple in this image are distinguished not by gender but by age, or rather, by age-grade: the standing figure is bearded and therefore an adult (post-20) male, the seated figure is adolescent, still what the Greeks called a *pais*, literally 'child', probably in his mid-to-late teens.

The scene is therefore one of *paiderastia* – literally, the erotic desire of a boy – except that the normal, expected direction of sexual energy is reversed. Rather than the adult being the active partner in the embrace, it is the *pais* who is drawing the older man down with both hands, apparently to the adult's surprise, for a kiss on the lips.

There are other reverse-direction images on pots of the same sort: in one the *pais* is actually leaping into the older adult's arms in his eagerness. As with many vase scenes, however, whether of myth or of 'real life', there is a good deal of fantasy involved here. This depicted response (or rather initiative) of the *pais* is just what an ancient Greek adult *erastes* (lover), would have hoped for in his younger partner – but in reality probably wouldn't all that often have received.

The cup of which this is the central scene is a wine drinking cup, a *kylix*, that would have been used at the male drinking party called the *symposium* (a 'drinking-together'). Greeks drank their wine mixed with water, but the strength of the mix could vary, and they tended to drink a great deal. So that, as they quaffed, the scenes on the *tondo* (interior) of the *kylix* would become ever clearer – or blurred...

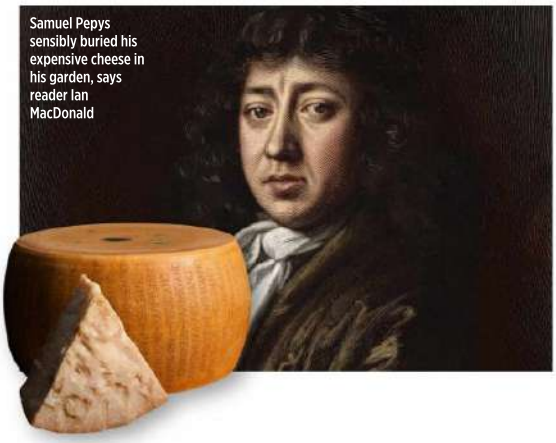
WARRIOR POET

In a recent Q&A section (September 2021), I was pleased to read the elegantly perspicacious summation of Admiral Yi Sun-shin, a man who is often dubbed the Korean Admiral Nelson for his outstanding military finesse and bravery, which gained fear and respect from friends and foes inside and outside Korea. The piece demonstrated Yi Sun-shin's military excellence, including his invention of the turtle ship, but I'd like to also draw attention to his artistic and scholarly prowess.

An erudite man conversant in classical literature, Yi Sun-shin wrote poems and essays for his journal, *War Journal of Admiral Yi Sun-shin*, and was a romantic soldier figure whose poetic sensitivity and artistic imaginativeness helped create his innovative turtle ships in the 16th century. To me, he embodied the Homeric virtue of Arete, a balanced mixture of military skill and personal integrity, which deserves universal recognition.
Stephanie Suh, California

OF GRATE VALUE

In October's My Life in History piece, Richard Quincey wrote that he had been surprised to learn that Samuel Pepys had buried some cheese for safekeeping during the Great Fire of London.



Samuel Pepys sensibly buried his expensive cheese in his garden, says reader Ian MacDonald

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X2

We should remember that the cheese Pepys buried was Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, a variety of parmesan that has been made for hundreds of years in Italy's Po Valley. Made in the shape of giant wheels, which can weigh 80–200lbs, it was extremely expensive to import in Pepys' time, and its value increased still further as it matured.

Highly prized in the Middle Ages, parmesan was frequently given as a high-status gift. Henry VIII once received a hundred such cheeses from the Pope. Even today, banks in Italy store hundreds of thousands of wheels of parmesan in bank vaults as collateral for unsettled loans. Their total value is about £200m. Samuel Pepys certainly knew what he was doing, although we don't know if he was able to return later to retrieve his hoard.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

CROSSWORD WINNERS

The three lucky winners of the crossword from issue 97 are:

B Hair, North Yorkshire
S Needham, West Yorkshire
K Willing, Norfolk

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Ancestors* by Alice Roberts

Please note, due to Covid-19, we will be unable to post your prize until we are working in the office once more. Please bear with us!

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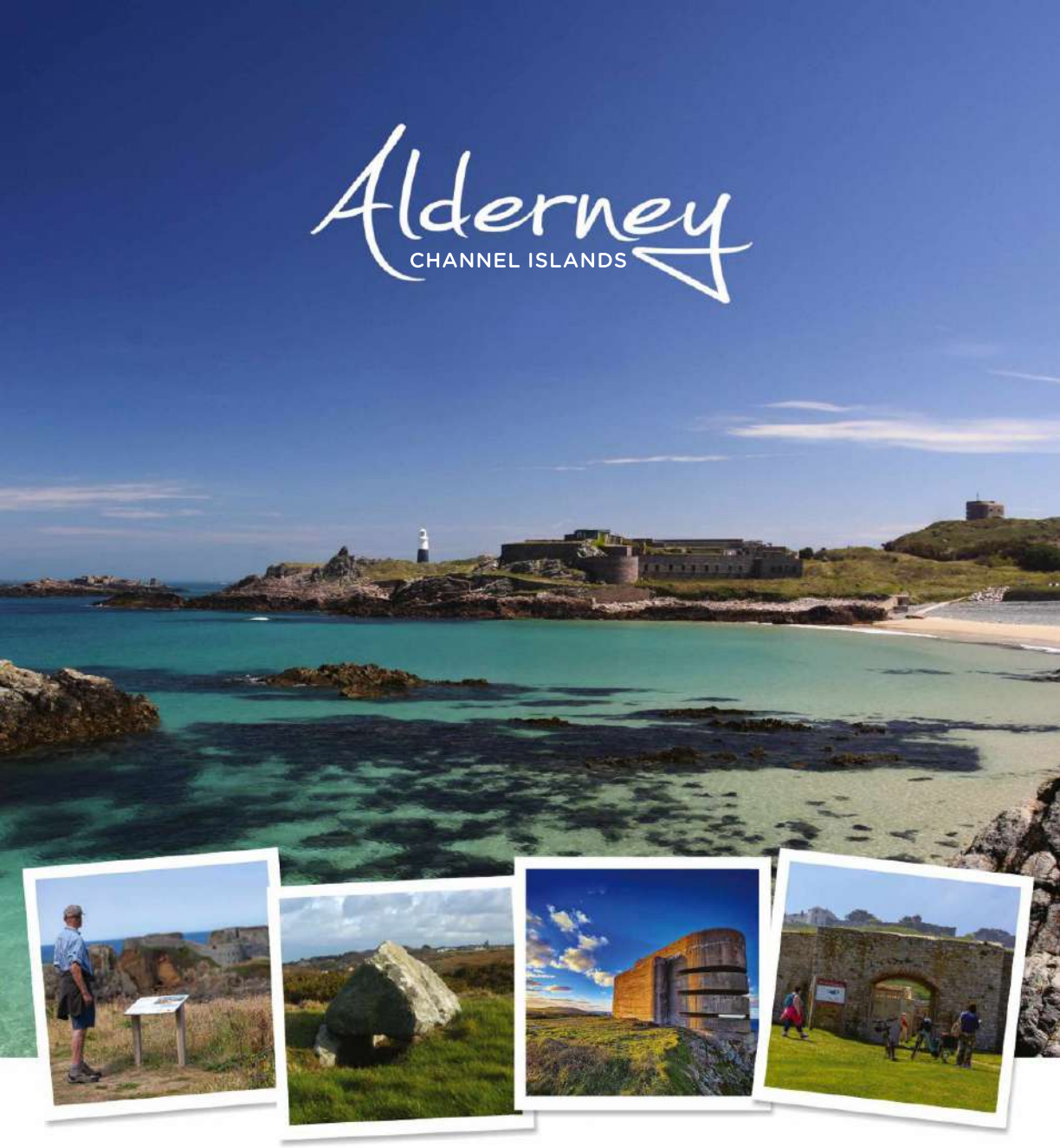
PHOTO FINISH

ARRESTING IMAGES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE PAST

TRAGIC COLLISION 1945

On a foggy morning in July 1945, a plane crashed into the north side of New York's Empire State Building. Despite World War II still raging in the Pacific, this wasn't an enemy attack, but a tragic accident. The unfortunate aircraft – a US B-25 Mitchell bomber – had been on its way to LaGuardia airport when it was rerouted to Newark, New Jersey, due to the poor weather conditions. Flying low over Manhattan to gain better visibility, the pilot swerved directly into the skyscraper, creating an 18-foot by 20-foot hole and triggering a fire. All three airmen on board the plane were killed, plus 11 civilians inside the building. Had the incident not occurred on a Saturday – when most office workers were at home – the death toll would have likely been even higher.

GETTY IMAGES



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